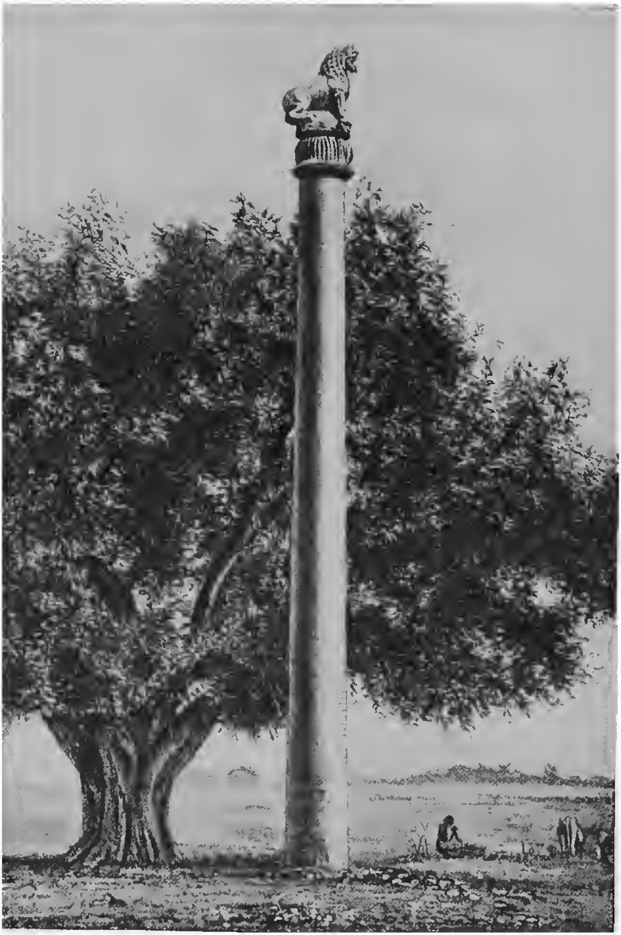
Asoka: The Buddhist Emperor of India

Rulers of India

ASOKA

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PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
LONDON, EDINBURGH
NEW YORK

PLATE I



ASOKA'S PILLAR AT LAURIYÂ-NANDANGARH

Frontispiece.]

RULERS OF INDIA

Asoka

THE BUDDHIST EMPEROR OF INDIA

BY

VINCENT A. SMITH, M.R.A.S.

LATE OF THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS: 1901

OXFORD

PRINTED AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

BY HORACE HART, M.A.

PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

A VOLUME on Asoka Maurya by Professor Rhys Davids was intended to be the first of the 'Rulers of India' series, but unfortunately circumstances prevented the fulfilment of that intention, and the series was closed leaving vacant the niche destined for the great Buddhist emperor. With the approval of Professor Rhys Davids I have undertaken the preparation of a supplementary volume giving in a popular form the substance of what is known concerning the Maurya empire. The sources of our knowledge of ancient Indian history are so meagre that it is impossible to treat the subject of this volume in a manner similar to that in which the biographies of Akbar, Albuquerque, and other Indian worthies have been treated. All minute biographical details are lacking, and a distinct picture of the man Asoka cannot be painted. Nevertheless, enough is known to render the subject interesting, and if my book should fail to interest readers, the fault will lie rather with the author than with the subject.

The chapter entitled 'The History of Asoka' will be found to differ widely from all other publications, such as Cunningham's *Bhilsa Topes*, which treat of that topic. I have tried to follow the example of the best modern historians, and to keep the legends

separate from what seems to me to be authentic history. Among the legends I have placed the stories of the conversion of Ceylon and of the deliberations of the so-called Third Council. All the forms of those stories which have reached us are crowded with absurdities and contradictions from which legitimate criticism cannot extract trustworthy history.

I reject absolutely the Ceylonese chronology prior to the reign of Dutthagâmini in about B.C. 160. The undeserved credit given to the statements of the monks of Ceylon has been a great hindrance to the right understanding of ancient Indian history.

The translations of the inscriptions in this volume are based on those of Bühler, checked by comparison with the versions of other scholars, especially those of MM. Kern and Senart, and with the texts. Although I do not pretend to possess a critical knowledge of the Pâlî and Prâkrit languages, and have, therefore, rarely ventured on an independent interpretation, I hope that the revised versions in this volume may be found to be both accurate and readable.

A difficulty experienced by all translators of the Asoka inscriptions is that of finding an adequate compendious translation of *dharma* and its compounds. 'Religion,' 'righteousness,' 'truth,' 'the law,' 'the sacred law,' and, I dare say, other phrases, have been tried: all these are unsatisfactory. To my mind the rendering 'piety' or 'law of piety' seems the best. The fundamental principle of Asoka's ethics is filial piety, the Latin *pietas*, the Chinese *Hsiao*, which

is presented as the model and basis of all other virtues. The first maxim of the Chinese 'Sacred Edict,' the document most nearly resembling Asoka's Edicts, is this: 'Pay just regard to filial and fraternal duties, in order to give due importance to the relations of life.' Asoka's system may be said to be based on the same maxim. Such a system may well be described as 'the law of piety.'

In dealing with the vexed question of transliteration I have shunned the pedantic atrocities of international systems, which do not shrink from presenting Krishna in the guise of Kṛṣṇa, Champâ as *K*ampâ, and so on. The consonants in the Indian words and names in this book are to be pronounced as in English, and the vowels usually as in Italian. The short *a* has an indistinct sound as in the word 'woman.' Long vowels are marked when necessary; other diacritical marks have not been used in the text.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF ASOKA

WHEN Alexander, invincible before all enemies save death, passed away at Babylon in the summer of the year B.C. 323, and his generals assembled in council to divide his empire, they were compelled perforce to decide that the distant Indian provinces should remain in the hands of the officers to whom they had been entrusted by the king. But the decision of the fate of India no longer rested with Greek generals in council at Babylon, for the natives of the country took the decision into their own hands.

In the cold season following the death of Alexander the natives rose, killed the officers who represented Macedonian authority, and, while thinking to achieve independence, merely effected a change of masters. Their leader was a man of humble origin, by name Chandragupta Maurya, who assembled and organized from the predatory tribes of the north-western frontier of India a powerful force with which he expelled the foreigners. Having conquered the Panjâb and neighbouring countries, Chandragupta turned his arms against Dhana Nanda, King of Magadha, whom

he dethroned and slew. The usurper seated himself upon the vacant throne of Pâtaliputra, and ruled the realm with an iron hand.

Magadha was at that time the premier kingdom of India, and the irresistible combination of its forces with those previously recruited in the upper provinces enabled Chandragupta to extend his rule over the greater part of India from sea to sea.

Seleucus, surnamed Nikator, or the Conqueror, by reason of his many victories, had established himself as Satrap of Babylon after the second division of Alexander's empire made at Paradeisos in B.C. 321. Six years later he was driven out by his rival Antigonus, and compelled to flee to Egypt. After three years' exile he recovered Babylon, and devoted himself to the consolidation and extension of his power. He attacked and subjugated the Bactrians, and directed his victorious army against India in the hope of regaining the provinces which had been for a brief space held by his late master. But the vast hosts of teeming India led by Chandragupta were more than a match for the power of the Macedonian, who was compelled to renounce his ambition of surpassing Alexander by effecting the conquest of India, and to withdraw from the country. Terms of peace were arranged which comprised a matrimonial alliance between the two royal houses, and the cession to Chandragupta of all the Indian provinces of Alexander's empire, including the regions now known as Afghanistan, as far as the Parapa-

nîsus or Hindoo Koosh mountains. On his part, Chandragupta gave five hundred elephants to Seleucus. In the year B. C. 306 Seleucus assumed the regal title, as also did the other generals of Alexander in their respective provinces. Henceforth Seleucus is known to history as King of Syria.

About this time, or a little later, the Syrian monarch dispatched Megasthenes as his ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, at Pâtaliputra on the Ganges, the modern Patna and Bankipore. Megasthenes resided there for a considerable time, and, fortunately for posterity, took the trouble to record what he saw. A large part of his book has survived in fragments, which are almost the sole authority for what is known of India in the days of Chandragupta. The ambassador found the government of the Indian king strong and well organized, established in a magnificent fortified city, worthy to be the capital of a great kingdom. The royal camp at the capital was estimated to contain 400,000 souls, and an efficient standing army numbering 60,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 8,000 elephants, and a multitude of chariots, was maintained at the king's expense. On active service the army is said to have attained the huge total of 600,000 men[1].

[1] The authorities for the history of Chandragupta (Sandrakottos, Sandrakoptos, Androkottos) are Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk. v. ch. 6; *Indika*, various passages; Q. Curtius, Bk. viii. ch. 9; Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, ch. 62; Justin, Bk. xv. ch. 4; Appian, *Syriakê*, ch. 55; Strabo, ii. 1. 9, and xv. 1. 36; ibid. i. 53 and i. 57; Athenaios, *Deipnosophists*, ch. 18 *d*; Pliny,

With this overwhelming and well-equipped force Chandragupta crushed all rivals, and became the first Emperor of India. After twenty-four years of strong government he died, and transmitted the empire which he had won to his son Bindusâra Amitraghâta [1], who reigned for twenty-five years. The only recorded event of his reign is the dispatch to his court of an ambassador named Deimachos by the King of Syria. In the year B. C. 280 Seleucus Nikator, who was in the seventy-eighth year of his age, was murdered, and was succeeded on the Syrian

Hist. Nat. vi. 21. 8–23. All these passages have been collected and accurately translated by Mr. McCrindle in his valuable books entitled, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great* (Constable, 1896); and *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (Trübner, 1877). The passage in Justin is the most important. Justin abridged the work of Trogus Pompeius, who lived in the time of Augustus. The ultimate authority of all these writers is chiefly Megasthenes, whom Arrian (*Indika*, xvii) describes as a man 'of approved character.' Strabo, who was disgusted by the travellers' tales with which the ambassador embellished his work, formed a less favourable opinion of Megasthenes, whom he unjustly stigmatized as a liar. For all matters which came under his personal observation Megasthenes seems perfectly trustworthy.

[1] Bindusâra (*Vishṇu Purâṇa, Mahâvaṁsa, Dîpavaṁsa, Parisishṭaparvan* of the Jains); Bhadrasâra (*Vâyu Purâṇa*); Nandasâra (*Brahmâṇḍa Purâṇa*); Vârisâra (*Bhâgavata Purâṇa*). Strabo (quoted, *Ancient India*, p. 70) records the mission of Dêimachos to Amitrochades, the son of Chandragupta. Amitrochades (Skr. Amitraghâta) must therefore be a title of Bindusâra. Indian kings are frequently known by two names. See Miss Duff's excellent work, *The Chronology of India* (Constable, 1899).

throne by his son Antiochus Soter. Eight years after the death of Seleucus, Asoka, a son of Bindusâra, and the third sovereign of the Maurya dynasty, ascended the throne of Pâtaliputra, and undertook the government of the Indian empire.

According to the silly fictions of mendacious monks, Asoka waded to the throne through a sea of blood, securing his position by the massacre of ninety-nine brothers, one brother only, the youngest, being saved alive. These fictions, an extract of which will be found in a later chapter, do not merit serious criticism. The inscriptions prove that the brothers and sisters of the king were still living in the middle of the reign, and that they and all the members of the royal family were the objects of the sovereign's anxious solicitude[1]. The empire won and consolidated by the genius of Chandragupta had passed to his son Bindusâra, and when, after the lapse of twenty-five years,, the sceptre again passed from the hands of Bindusâra to those of his son Asoka, there is no reason to suppose that bloodshed was necessary to secure the succession. Of the events of the first eight years of Asoka's reign no record has survived. In his ninth year he undertook the conquest of the kingdom of Kalinga on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. His arms were successful, and the extensive territories of Kalinga were incorporated with the empire. But the horrors which must accompany

[1] Rock Edicts IV, V, VI; Pillar Edict VII; Queen's Edict.

war, even successful war, made a deep impression on the heart of the victorious monarch, who has recorded on the rocks in imperishable words the sufferings of the vanquished and the remorse of the victor. The record is instinct with personal feeling, and still carries across the ages the moan of a human soul. The king, who adopts in his edicts the title of Priyadarsin (or Piyadasi), meaning 'the Humane,' and omits his personal name of Asoka, speaks thus:—

'His Majesty King Priyadarsin in the ninth year of his reign conquered the Kalingas.

One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times that number perished.

Ever since the annexation of the Kalingas, His Majesty has zealously protected the Law of Piety, has been devoted to that Law, and has proclaimed its precepts.

His Majesty feels remorse on account of the conquest of the Kalingas, because, during the subjugation of a previously unconquered country, slaughter, death, and taking away captive of the people necessarily occur, whereat His Majesty feels profound sorrow and regret.

There is, however, another reason for His Majesty feeling still more regret, inasmuch as in such a country dwell Brahmans and ascetics, men of different sects, and householders, who all practise obedience to elders, obedience to father and mother, obedience to teachers, proper treatment of friends, acquaintances, comrades, relatives, slaves, and servants, with fidelity of devotion.

To such people dwelling in that country happen violence, slaughter, and separation from those they love.

Even those persons who are themselves protected, retain

their affections undiminished: ruin falls on their friends, acquaintances, comrades, and relatives, and in this way violence is done to (the feelings of) those who are personally unhurt.

All this diffused misery is matter of regret to His Majesty. For there is no country in which are not found countless communities of Brahmans and ascetics, nor is there any country where the people have faith in one sect only.

The loss of even the hundredth or the thousandth part of the persons who were then slain, carried away captive, or done to death in Kalinga would now be a matter of deep regret to His Majesty.

Although a man should do him an injury, His Majesty holds that it must be patiently borne, so far as it possibly can be borne.

Even upon the forest tribes in his dominions His Majesty has compassion, though advised to destroy them in detail, and though the power to harry them is in His Majesty's hands. They are warned to this effect: "Shun evil-doing, that ye may escape destruction." For His Majesty desires for all animate beings security, control over the passions, peace of mind and joyousness.

And this is the chiefest conquest, in His Majesty's opinion, the conquest by the Law of Piety[1].'

The only authentic account of the reasons which induced Asoka to adopt the Buddhist *dharma*, or Law of Piety, as the rule of his life and the foundation of public morality, is the edict above quoted. The grotesque and contradictory tales told by monkish romancers as explanations of the great king's change

[1] Rock Edict XIII. M. Senart, in *J. R. As. Soc.* for 1900, pp. 335-342 proposes certain corrections based on a fragment recently discovered at Girnâr. Cp. Minor Rock Edict I.

of heart are in themselves incredible, as well as incompatible with the simple and credible explanation given in the king's own words.

Doubtless some now forgotten preacher, who possessed the gift of persuasiveness, must have so expounded the doctrine of the Sâkya sage as to awaken the royal conscience, and to evoke the feeling of remorse for the horrors of war which is so vividly expressed in the edict. The feeling, however aroused, was genuine, and is the keynote for the interpretation of the whole series of the edicts. The passage quoted was composed in the thirteenth year of the reign. The last of the dated edicts belongs to the twenty-eighth year. Nothing that was written in the interval is inconsistent with the declaration that the only true conquest is that effected by the Law of Piety, and not conquest by force of arms.

The conclusion is therefore justified that the subjugation of Kalinga was the only great military achievement of the reign, and that from his ninth year Asoka eschewed military glory, and devoted himself to the problems of internal administration, with the special object of promulgating and enforcing the Buddhist Law of Piety, as being the best means of securing the happiness and welfare of his subjects and neighbours. The tenth Rock Edict, published in the fourteenth year of the reign, has for its special subject the contrast between true glory and military renown.

We have Asoka's own authority for stating that in

the ninth year of his reign, for the reasons above explained, he joined the Buddhist community as a lay disciple.

He tells us that for about two years and a half he displayed little zeal as a convert. Towards the close of the eleventh year of his reign his interest in the Buddhist teaching was in some way stimulated; and he resolved to devote his life and all the resources of his imperial power to the promulgation and propagation of the doctrine which, in his opinion, opened the gate of heaven, and secured the happiness and welfare of mankind here and hereafter.

He therefore took upon himself the vows of a Buddhist monk or friar, and joined the Order (*saṁgha*). The spectacle of a reigning monarch turned monk is so strange to modern European eyes that the fact of Asoka's ordination has been doubted, and attempts have been made to explain away the plain language in which the king (Minor Rock Edict I) contrasts his position as a careless lay disciple with that which he had attained as a zealous monk. But no sufficient reason exists for hesitation in accepting Asoka's language in its natural sense. Bühler has been able to cite one parallel case, that of the Chaulukya king, Kumârapâla, a Jain, who assumed the title of 'lord of the Order,' and at various periods of his reign took vows of continence, temperance, abstention from animal food, and refraining from confiscation of the property of the faithful. It is probable that Asoka similarly undertook vows of imperfect and limited

obligation. It is also possible that he once, or several times, adopted the practices of a Buddhist mendicant friar for a few days at a time, during which periods of retreat his ministers would have administered the kingdom. The Buddhist ceremony of ordination (*upasampadâ*) does not convey indelible orders, or involve a life-long vow. Both in Burma and Ceylon men commonly enter the Order temporarily, and after a time resume civil life. Asoka could have done the same, and a proceeding which is easy for an ordinary man is doubly easy for an emperor. A formal compliance with the rules, requiring the monk to beg his bread, could have been arranged for without difficulty within the precincts of the palace. The fact that Asoka did really become a Buddhist monk is vouched for by an independent testimony, which is the more valuable because it is contained in an incidental remark. A thousand years after Asoka's time, the Chinese pilgrim, I-tsing, notes that the statues of Asoka represent him as wearing a monk's robe of a particular pattern. The emperor could not have worn such a robe, unless he had joined the Order, as he says that he did [1].

[1] I have adopted Bühler's and Kern's interpretation of Minor Rock Edict I (*Ind. Ant.* vi. 154; *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 114). The status of *upâsaka*, or lay-disciple, is contrasted with that of the person who has entered the Order (*saṁgha*). See Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, p. 46. I-tsing (*A Record of Buddhist Practices*, ch. xi), when discussing the mode in which Buddhist monks should wear their garments, explains a particular fashion, and adds (p. 73, ed. Takakusu): 'The image of king Asoka

Asoka's zeal for the propagation and enforcement of the practical moral code of Buddhism, or Law of Piety, led him not only to adopt within his own vast dominions the measures which seemed best adapted to the purpose, but also to engage in a well-considered scheme of missionary effort[1]. In the space of two years between the emperor's entry into the Order in the eleventh year and the publication of his earliest inscriptions in the thirteenth year of the reign, missions charged with the preaching of the doctrine of the Sâkya sage had been dispatched to Ceylon and the independent kingdoms in the south of the Peninsula, to Mysore and the Bombay coast, to the Mahratta country, to the mountaineers of the Himâlayas and Kashmîr, and to Pegu. Although criticism cannot accept the wonderful tales told by monkish writers of the sudden and wholesale conversions effected by the missionaries of Asoka, there is no doubt that the missions laid the foundations of the Buddhist church in all the countries named. In Ceylon their work abides to this day.

The dispatch of missionaries by Asoka is, indeed,

has its garment in this way.' Cunningham (*Bhilsa Topes*, p. 197, Pl. x) guessed that the fine statue crowning the northern detached pillar at Sânchi might be one of Asoka; but that figure is clothed in a waistcloth (*dhoti*) only, and has a nimbus. It cannot, therefore, be intended to represent the emperor.

[1] See Rock Edict VI: 'And what is the object of all my exertion? Simply to acquit my debt to living beings—that I may make some of them happy here, and that hereafter they may attain to heaven.'

one of the facts of primary importance in the history of mankind. For about two centuries and a half prior to Asoka's conversion Buddhism had maintained its position in a portion of the valley of the Ganges as a sect of Hinduism. Its founder, Gautama Sâkyamuni, was born, lived, and died within the region comprised between 82° and 86° east longitude and 24° to 28° north latitude, or, in other words, the country between Gayâ, Allahabad, and the hills.

So far as we can see, the transformation of this local sect into a world-religion is the work of Asoka alone. The romances written by monks naturally represent the king as a tool in the hands of his clerical advisers, to whom all the credit of the missionary enterprise is given. But the monuments do not support this view. Asoka claims all the credit for himself. Inasmuch as he must have been an exceptionally able man to have succeeded in governing with distinction a vast empire throughout a long reign, it is not probable that he was ever the slave of the priests, and he is fairly entitled to the credit of the measures taken in his name.

Within his own dominions Asoka provided for the comfort of man and beast by the plantation of shade-giving and fruit-bearing trees, the digging of wells, and the erection of rest-houses and watering-places at convenient intervals along the high roads. He devoted special attention to the cultivation and dissemination of medicinal herbs and roots, both within his own

dominions and in the territories of friendly independent sovereigns[1].

In the thirteenth year of the reign, as a special means for the inculcation of the royal teaching, all local governors were ordered to hold assemblies in which the Law of Piety should be preached, expounded, and discussed. The officials of subordinate rank were bound to attend these assemblies to receive instruction from their superiors, and were warned that this duty must not be allowed to interfere with the discharge of ordinary official business. In most places these assemblies were to be convoked quinquennially, but the Viceroys stationed at Taxila in the Panjâb, and at Ujjain in Central India, were required to hold such assemblies once every three years[2].

The experience of another year convinced the king that more elaborate official organization was necessary in order to give full effect to his instructions. He therefore appointed special officers, whose title (*dharma mahâmâtra*) may be rendered as 'Censors of the Law of Piety,' to supervise the execution of his precepts. These officers were instructed to devote themselves to the establishment and furtherance of piety, not only among the king's faithful lieges, but among the semi-independent border tribes. They

[1] Rock Edict II; Pillar Edict VII. The word *chikisakâ* (*chikîccha*, Girnâr) is translated 'remèdes' by M. Senart. Bühler adopts the older interpretation and translates 'hospitals.' It is difficult to decide which is right.

[2] Rock Edict III; Detached (Kalinga) Rock Edicts.

were in general terms directed to use their best endeavours to secure the welfare and happiness of all classes of the population, and were specially ordered to watch over the interests of the poor and aged, to prevent the infliction of wrongful imprisonment or corporal punishment, and to grant remissions of sentence in cases where the criminal was advanced in years, burdened with a large family, or overwhelmed by sudden calamity. The censors were further enjoined to superintend, both at the capital and in the provincial towns, the female establishments of the king's brothers and sisters, and of all other members of the royal family; and also to exercise a general control over all persons devoted to pious works and almsgiving.

Later in the reign a Royal Almoner's department, administered by the censors and other high officials, was organized, and charged with the distribution of the gifts made by the sovereign and his queens. A short special edict, known as the Queen's Edict, addressed to officials of the Almoner's department, has been preserved [1].

The edicts furnish several summaries of the *dharma*, or Law of Piety, on the establishment and propagation of which the king had set his heart. By combining these summaries the leading provisions of that Law may be stated as follows:—

All men are regarded by the sovereign as his children, owing him filial obedience, and entitled to

[1] Rock Edicts V, XII; Pillar Edict VII; Queen's Edict.

receive from him a parent's care. Every man is bound to cultivate the virtues of self-control, purity of mind, gratitude, and fidelity. On the other hand, he should abstain from the vices of rage, cruelty, anger, pride, and jealousy. He should constantly practise self-examination, and be strictly truthful. Great stress is laid on the imperative duty of respecting the sanctity of all animal life, and of treating all living creatures with kindness. Obedience to father and mother is declared to be essential; the aged are to receive due reverence from the young, and the teacher from his pupil. Relatives, ascetics, and Brahmans are to be treated with decorum; servants, and even slaves, with kindness. Liberality must be shown to friends, acquaintances, relatives, ascetics, and Brahmans. All sects and creeds are in fundamental agreement about essentials, and all alike aim at the attainment of purity of mind and self-control, therefore he who follows the path marked out by the Law of Piety must abstain from speaking aught evil concerning his neighbour's faith [1].

[1] Summaries of the Law of Piety are given in Rock Edicts III, IV, VII, IX, XI, XIII; Minor Rock Edict, No. 2. of Siddâpura; Pillar Edicts III and VII. Compare the Chinese doctrine of *hsiao*, or filial reverence, which is treated as the foundation of all virtue. The Sacred Edict, sermons officially issued by the second and third emperors of the present dynasty, is the nearest parallel to the Asoka Edicts. The 'Sacred Edict' was well translated by the Rev. William Milne, under the title of 'The Sacred Edict, containing sixteen maxims of the emperor Kang-he, amplified by his son, the emperor Yoong-ching' (London, 1817).

Supplementary instructions addressed to the royal officers in their official capacity point out that the ideal official should be free from envy, harshness, and impatience. Perseverance and the firm determination to resist all temptations to indolence or discouragement are the root of success in the performance of official duty. Officers are warned that they cannot hope for the favour either of heaven or of their sovereign if they fail to comply fully with his commands, and the officials in the conquered province of Kalinga are censured for a partial failure in the execution of the duties laid upon them [1].

In a passage of the 'True Conquest Edict,' already quoted, Asoka declares his unwillingness to proceed to extremities against the wild jungle-folk who at many points dwelt on the borders of his settled provinces. Such folk abounded on the borders of Kalinga, as they do to this day, and a very interesting edict, dating from the fourteenth year, specially addressed to the governor and magistrates of that province, and published in it only, gives particular instructions concerning the principles on which the wild tribes should be treated. The king reiterates his declaration that all men, even wild jungle-tribes, are his children, and insists that his officers must give effect to his views. They are instructed that it is His Majesty's will and immutable resolve that every effort must be made to inspire the border tribes with confidence, and to persuade them

[1] Detached Rock Edicts; Pillar Edicts I, IV.

that the king desires them to receive at his hands happiness and not sorrow. If they will but trust in the royal sincerity, they may relieve their minds of all disquietude and abide in peace. The officials are further enjoined to persuade the tribes that the best way to secure the sovereign's good will, and to assure their own welfare both in this world and in the next, is to faithfully practise the Law of Piety which his orders commend to them[1].

If Asoka had the happiness to find many frontier officers who were competent to fully act up to the principles thus enunciated, he was, indeed, a fortunate sovereign; but, unfortunately, while the admirable instructions have survived, little is known concerning their practical operation.

Several edicts record the successive steps taken by the king to give effect to the principle of the sanctity of animal life, which was one of his cardinal doctrines. In the first eight years of his reign he was not troubled with any scruples on the subject, and vast multitudes of animals were each day slaughtered for the supply of the royal kitchens. From the ninth to the thirteenth year of the reign two peacocks and one deer were, as a rule, killed daily for the king's table; but from the latter year, when the edicts of the Law of Piety were first issued, and the religious assemblies were instituted, even this modest supply was stopped, and no living creature was compelled to surrender its life in order to gratify the royal appetite.

[1] Detached Rock Edict, so-called No. II.

In the eleventh year of his reign, when Asoka, to use his own phrase, entered on the path of true knowledge, he gave up the pleasures of the chase, and substituted for hunting-parties pious tours, or pilgrimages, devoted to almsgiving, preaching, and ethical discussion. In the thirteenth year of the reign, in addition to the stoppage of slaughter for the supply of the royal table, slaughter of animals for sacrifice was prohibited at the capital. The king did not apparently attempt to prohibit animal sacrifices throughout his dominions, knowing that such a prohibition could not be enforced. At the capital holiday feasts, which ordinarily involved the destruction of animal life, were also prohibited. In the twenty-seventh year of the reign Asoka felt himself strong enough to further protect the sanctity of animal life by an elaborate code of detailed regulations, binding on all classes of the population without distinction of creed, social customs, or religious feeling.

A long list was published of animals the slaughter of which was absolutely prohibited, and this absolute prohibition was extended to all four-footed animals of which the carcasses are not eaten or otherwise utilized by man. This regulation largely interfered with the sportsman's liberty, and its terms would seem to denounce the killing of a tiger or a lion as being unlawful. The remaining rules were directed to the imposition of restrictions on the slaughter of animals permitted to be killed, and to the prohibition or mitigation of different kinds of mutilation.

On fifty-six specified days in the year fish might not be either caught or sold, and on the same days, even in game preserves, animals might not be destroyed. On all festival days and many other specified days, aggregating about a quarter of the year, the castration of bulls and other quadrupeds was prohibited. The caponing of cocks was absolutely prohibited at all times. During five particular fortnights the branding of horses and cattle was declared unlawful. The enforcement of these minute regulations must have given plenty of employment to the censors and magistrates[1].

Monkish legend, mendacious in this particular as in so many others, asserts that Asoka abolished the punishment of death. His legislation proves that the idea of such abolition never entered his thoughts. His language implies that he regarded the death penalty as an unavoidable necessity, which might be made less horrible than it had been, but could not be done away with. Asoka, while recognizing the necessity for arming the magistrates with power to inflict the extreme penalty of the law, exercised his royal prerogative of pardon, and on each anniversary of his solemn coronation liberated all condemned prisoners. In the twenty-seventh year of the reign a rule was introduced that every prisoner condemned to death should invariably be granted a respite of three days before execution, in which to prepare himself for the next world[2].

[1] Rock Edicts I, VIII; Pillar Edicts V, VII.

[2] Pillar Edict IV.

Asoka attached the greatest importance to the utmost possible promptitude in the administration of justice, and to the readiness of the sovereign to hear complaints at all times and at all places. His views would still meet with general approval from the natives of India, who prize very highly readiness of access to their rulers, and set no value whatever upon regularity of procedure. Asoka announced to his people that he was ready at any place, and at any hour of the day or night, to receive and redress complaints. No more popular announcement could be made by an Indian sovereign, although to the Western mind it seems unpractical and unbusiness-like. When Asoka adds to this announcement the emphatic declaration—

> 'I am never satisfied with the adequacy of my exertions or the promptitude of my decision of cases. Work I must for the public benefit, and . . . the object of all my exertion is simply to acquit my debt to living beings, so that I may make some of them happy in this world, and that hereafter they may attain heaven,'

—he is entitled to be believed[1]. The immense trouble which he took to promulgate and propagate his teaching proves both his sincerity and his habits of industry. The vigorous impulse which his powerful patronage undoubtedly gave to Buddhism demonstrates that his efforts were not in vain, and that his missionary zeal, although it must have encountered many obstacles and suffered many disappointments,

[1] Rock Edict VI.

was justified by success in the propaganda so energetically worked.

Asoka placed great reliance upon his personal example as a powerful influence in the conversion of his people and his neighbours to his way of thinking. He had no hesitation in recording more than once the belief that he had done many good deeds, and was persuaded that the good deeds of the sovereign were readily imitated by loyal subjects.

'Whatsoever meritorious deeds I have done,' he observes, 'those deeds the people have copied and imitated; whence follows the consequence that growth is now taking place, and will further increase, in the virtues of obedience to father and mother, obedience to teachers, reverence to the aged, and kindly treatment of Brahmans and ascetics, of the poor and wretched, yea, even of slaves and servants [1].'

No doubt the personal example of the sovereign, supported by all the efforts of a highly organized bureaucracy and a rich and zealous clergy, must have been a potent factor in securing popular adherence to the royal views.

The Bhabra Edict stands alone in its outspoken avowal of Asoka's devotion to Buddhism. The other edicts are concerned with practical morals only, and are so drafted that their teaching might be accepted by the members of any Indian sect. The Bhabra document is addressed to the Buddhist clergy exclusively, and was recorded at a monastery situated on the top of a remote hill. It was probably not

[1] Pillar Edicts II, VII; Rock Edict V.

communicated to the general public, and the existence of this peculiar composition must not be taken as evidence that Asoka forced the distinctive doctrines of Buddhism down the throats of an unwilling people. He seems rather to have confined his official propaganda to the inculcation of practical morality, and to have cared little whether or not his pupils formally joined the Buddhist church [1].

Asoka looked back with satisfaction on the legislation which prescribed minute regulations for the conservation of animal life and the mitigation of suffering, and on many other pious ordinances of which he was the author, but candidly admits that such ordinances are in themselves of small account, and that the growth of living piety must ultimately depend, not on external regulations, but on the inward conviction wrought in the minds of men by meditation on moral truth [2]. In the same spirit he treats with scorn the many corrupt and worthless ceremonies commonly performed by the womenkind, and extols

[1] I accept M. Senart's suggestion that the phrase 'the Magadhan clergy' probably means 'the Buddhist clergy,' Magadha being regarded as the fountain head of Buddhism. Five out of the seven passages cited in the edict as from the Buddhist scriptures have been identified in the *Nikâyas*. (Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. xiii; *Journal of the Pâlí Text Society*, 1896; *J. R. As. Soc.*, 1898, p. 639.) As to the site of the inscription, see Cunningham, *Reports*, ii. 248, and *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, i. 24. There is no evidence that the edict was addressed to the Council of Pâtaliputra, even if that Council was ever held. See Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 110.

[2] Pillar Edict VII.

as the only true ceremonial a life of piety, which, even if it should fail to secure temporal advantages, will certainly ensure a harvest of infinite merit to be reaped in the world to come[1].

The eighth Rock Edict, as has been already observed, records the institution, in the eleventh year of the reign, of royal progresses or tours devoted to pious purposes, in lieu of the hunting-parties which had previously been customary. The hunting-parties enjoyed by Asoka in his unregenerate days must have been conducted in the same way as those of his grandfather, which are described by Megasthenes as follows;

'Another purpose for which he [the king] leaves his palace is to offer sacrifice; a third is to go to the chase, for which he departs in Bacchanalian fashion. Crowds of women surround him, and outside of this circle spearmen are ranged. The road is marked off with ropes, and it is death, for men and women alike, to pass within the ropes. Men with drums and gongs lead the procession. The king hunts in the enclosures and shoots arrows from a platform. At his side stand two or three armed women. If he hunts in the open grounds he shoots from the back of an elephant. Of the women, some are in chariots, some on horses, and some even on elephants, and they are equipped with weapons of every kind as if they were going on a campaign[2].'

The employment of an Amazonian guard composed of foreign women is known to have been a regular institution of the kings of ancient India.

For the pleasures of the chase as described above,

[1] Rock Edict IX.

[2] Strabo, in McCrindle, *Ancient India*, p. 72.

those of pious tours seem to be rather an inadequate substitute. They are described in the eighth Rock Edict as consisting of visits and almsgiving to Brahmans and ascetics, visits to elders, inspection of the country and people, preaching and discussion of the Law of Piety, and largess of gold. In these latter days, the king remarks, this is the kind of pleasure which he enjoys.

Such a pious tour was undertaken by Asoka in the twenty-first year of his reign. Following, probably, the route taken by the Buddha when on the way to his death, the king started from his capital Pâtaliputra, crossed the Ganges, and entered the Vaisâli territory of the Lichchhavi tribe, now known as the Muzaffarpur and Champâran districts. His line of march is marked by the ruins of Vaisâli (Basâṛ), which include the Bakhira lion-pillar, by the *stûpa* of Kesariyâ, and the lion-pillars of Lauriyâ Ararâj and Lauriyâ Nandangarh. He may then either have kept to the east, passing Râmpurwa, where another lion-pillar lies, and have then crossed the passes over the hills to Kusinagara, the scene of Gautama Buddha's death, or he may have turned westward, crossed the Gandak river, and proceeded direct through the Tarâi to the Lumbini Garden, the reputed scene of the birth of Gautama Buddha. At the sacred garden he erected a pillar surmounted by the figure of a horse, and recorded upon it in beautifully incised characters, as perfect to-day as they were when first engraved, the brief record:

'His Majesty, King Piyadasi, in the twenty-first year of his reign, having come in person, did reverence. Because here was born Buddha, the Sâkya sage, he had a stone horse made and set up a stone pillar. Because here the Venerable One was born, the village of Lummini has been made revenue-free, and has partaken of the king's bounty.'

The king then passed on some miles further west, and did reverence to the *stûpa* of Kanakamuni, or Konakâmana, one of the Buddhas, who preceded Gautama. Here the king set up another pillar and recorded his visit, adding the interesting remark that he had already, in the fifteenth year of his reign, for the second time, enlarged the *stûpa*. There can be little doubt that the tour was continued into Nepâl as far as Lalita Patan and Kathmându, and again towards the west until the royal pilgrim reached Srâvastî, where the river Râpti emerges from the hills, and that he there did reverence to the sacred spots where Gautama so long dwelt and preached. But the great pillars, each seventy feet high, which he erected at Srâvastî, though rumoured still to exist, remain to be discovered, and at present the course of the pilgrimage can be verified at two points only.

The memory of this pilgrimage was preserved by tradition, and the story of it is told in the Sanskrit romance called the *Asokâvadâna*. Although the chronology of the romance, which places Asoka only a century after the death of Buddha, is manifestly erroneous, and no reliance can be placed upon the details related, the inscriptions in the Tarâi prove

that the legend had a foundation in fact. According to the story, which will be found in a later chapter, the king, under the guidance of a saint named Upagupta, visited in succession the Lumbini Garden, Kapilavastu, the Bodhi tree at Buddha Gayâ, Rishipatana, or Sârnâth, near Benares, Kusinagara, the Jetavana monastery at Srâvastî, the *stûpa* of Vakkula, and the *stûpa* of Ânanda, giving great largess at every place except the *stûpa* of Vakkula, where the king gave only a single copper coin, because Saint Vakkula had had few obstacles to surmount, and had consequently done little good to his fellow creatures [1].

The reason given for refusing largess at the *stûpa* of Vakkula, although legendary, is in accordance with Asoka's character as revealed by his writings. No student of the edicts can fail to be struck by the purely human and severely practical nature of the teaching. The object aimed at is the happiness of living creatures, man and beast. The teacher assumes and categorically asserts that filial piety and the other virtues commended open the path to happiness here and hereafter, but no attempt is made to prove any proposition by reasoning. No foundation either

[1] The site of Kusinagara is still unknown. I am convinced that it lies in Nepâl beyond the first range of hills. See my work entitled *The Remains near Kasia, the reputed site of Kuçanagara* (Allahabad, 1896). As to the position of Srâvastî, see *J. R. A. S.*, July, 1898, and January, 1900.

For the *Asokâvadâna*, see Burnouf, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme*, and Râjendralâla Mitra's *Sanskrit Nepalese Literature*.

of theology or of metaphysics is laid, and the ethical precepts inculcated are set forth for purely practical purposes as being self-evidently true. Men are exhorted to work out their own salvation.

> 'Whatsoever exertions His Majesty King Priyadarsin has made, all are made with a view to the life hereafter, so that every one may be freed from peril, which peril is sin. Difficult, verily, it is to attain such freedom, whether a man be of low or of high degree, save by the utmost exertion and complete self-denial, but especially difficult it is for the man of high degree' (*Tenth Rock Edict*).

This passage suggests, as do several other passages, familiar Biblical texts, but the spirit of the Bible is totally different from that of Asoka's teaching. The Bible, whether in the Old Testament or the New, insists upon the relation of man with God, and upon man's dependence on the grace of God. Asoka, in accordance with the teaching of his master, ignores, without denying, the existence of a supreme deity, and insists that man should by his own exertions free himself from sin, and by his own virtue win happiness here and hereafter.

The exact nature of Asoka's belief concerning a future life is not easily ascertained. Frequent reference is made to the life hereafter; heaven (*svarga*) is held out as an object of desire, and in one passage the approval of heaven is referred to. When the passages of the Buddhist scriptures mentioned in the Bhabra Edict as Asoka's favourite texts shall have been published and translated, it may be possible

to determine with more accuracy the king's attitude towards the great problems of existence. At present only one of these passages, that entitled 'Fears of the Future,' is accessible in English. This passage enumerates the physical dangers to which recluses are exposed, such as disease, attacks of wild beasts, &c., and recommends the use of renewed and timely efforts to avert such perils. Ten moral dangers are then enumerated, of which the principal are corruptions in doctrine and discipline, an inclination to appreciate the literary beauty of the scriptures rather than their intrinsic worth, laziness, luxury, and a taste for promiscuous company. Against these perils the recluse is warned to be sedulously on his guard, and to see that they are averted in good time[1]. Of course, like all Hindoos, he must have believed in the doctrine of rebirth, in some of its forms, and the heaven at which he aimed would have been to his mind but one stage in the long cycle of existences. The intense feeling for the sanctity of life, which is characteristic both of Asoka's Buddhism and of Jainism, is closely connected with the doctrine of rebirth, which binds together in one chain all living creatures, whether angels or demons, men or animals.

One of the most noticeable features in the teaching of Asoka is the enlightened religious toleration which is so frequently and emphatically recommended. While applauding and admiring with justice the

[1] *Journal of Pâlî Text Society*, 1896, p. 96.

extraordinary breadth and liberality of Asoka's sentiments, we should remember that in his days no really diverse religions existed in India. The creeds of Jesus, Muhammad, and Zoroaster were then unknown. The only organized religion was Hindooism, and that complex phenomenon is more accurately described as a social system than by the name either of religion or creed. The Hindoos then, as now, enjoyed the privilege of absolutely free thought, and were at liberty then, as now, to discuss, affirm, or deny the existence of God, or of the soul, and any other proposition in metaphysics or psychology which can suggest itself to speculative minds. Hindooism has never produced an exclusive, dominant, orthodox sect, with a formula of faith to be professed or rejected under pain of damnation. A Hindoo has at all times been free to believe what he pleases, so long as he eats the correct food, marries the proper woman, and so forth. Buddhism and Jainism are both in their origin merely sects of Hindooism—or rather, schools of philosophy founded by Hindoo reformers—which in course of time gathered an accretion of mythology round the original speculative nucleus.

When Asoka speaks of the toleration of other men's creeds, he is not thinking of exclusive, aggressive, militant religions like Islam and Christianity, but of Hindoo sects, all connected by many bonds of common sentiment. The Buddhist *Suttas*, and the treatise of I-tsing on Religious Practices, endeavour to explain the differences between various schools, but these are

so subtle, and often seemingly so trivial, that a Western mind does not readily grasp them.

Asoka was, therefore, in a position which enabled him to realize the idea that all Indian sects fundamentally agreed in essentials, all of them alike aiming at self-control and purity of life; and he felt fully justified in doing honour in various ways to Jains and Brahmanical Hindoos, as well as to Buddhists. While lavishing his treasure chiefly on Buddhist shrines and monasteries, he did not hesitate to spend large sums in hewing out of hard granite spacious cave-dwellings for the Brahmanical Ajîvika ascetics, and there can be no doubt, although proofs in the shape of monuments are not at present known, that the Jains too shared in his bounty. His censors were, as we have seen, equally concerned with Buddhists, Jains, and Brahmanists. Similar toleration was practised by later princes. Khâravela of Orissa, for instance, avows himself, in language almost identical with that of Asoka, to be a person who did reverence to the creeds of all sects[1]. But, notwithstanding, or perhaps in consequence of, his tolerant disposition, Asoka resented the claims of the Brahmans to be gods on earth, and took pride in the measures which he had adopted to humble the arrogance of the Brahmanical teachers[2]. He has, therefore, been almost

[1] For the Khâravela inscription, see Cunningham, *Corpus*, i. 27, Pl. xvii, and Bhagvân Lâl Indrajî in *Comptes-Rendus du vième Congrès Intern. d'Orientalistes*, vol. iii, pp. 2, 149.

[2] I follow M. Senart's interpretation of the Rûpnâth Minor Rock Edict.

ignored by Brahmanical literature, and is mentioned in only one inscription other than his own voluminous writings. Buddhist writers alone profess to give an account of his reign, in which so much was done for the diffusion and exaltation of the teaching of Gautama. Unfortunately, the Buddhist accounts of his reign are so overlaid with superstitious imbecilities, and distorted by sectarian and ecclesiastical bias, that they cannot be accepted as independent authorities, although useful as commentaries on, and supplements to, the authentic materials for his history.

The true full personal name of the great emperor would appear to have been Asoka vardhana, as given in the Purâṇas. The inscription of Rudradâman in Gujarât, dated in A.D. 150, simply gives him the name of Asoka Maurya, and refers to Chandragupta Maurya as one of his predecessors.

In the edicts he uses his name in religion, Priyadarsin (*Pâlî*, Piyadasi), which means 'the Humane,' and never makes use of his personal name [1]. When the edicts were first discovered and good texts were not available, some scholars felt doubts as to the identity of Asoka and Priyadarsin, but such doubts are now obsolete, and the identity is absolutely certain.

The Dîpavamsa, the most ancient of the Ceylonese

[1] It seems to me clear from the testimony of the Rudradâman inscription, and the tradition of Northern India, including Nepâl and Kashmîr, of the Chinese, and of Ceylon, that the emperor's personal name was Asoka, or, in its fuller form, Asoka vardhana.

chronicles, dating probably from the fourth century A.D., uses the names Asoka and Piyadasi as convertible terms [1]. To enumerate the other proofs of the identity of Asoka and Priyadarsin in this place is superfluous and would be wearisome, but one item of the overwhelming evidence may be cited. The pillar at the Lumbini Garden (Rummindeî), the traditional birthplace of the Buddha, the inscription on which has been already quoted, was, according to the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang, erected by Asoka. The inscription is, as in the case of the other monuments, recorded by Piyadasi Râja, who was, therefore, identical with Asoka.

Nothing definite is known as to the affinities and social position of the Maurya clan or tribe to which Chandragupta belonged. Justin's statement that the founder of the Maurya dynasty was of humble origin is probably based on statements recorded by contemporaries and may be accepted. The tribe or clan must therefore have ranked low in the social scale. Some Buddhist writers erroneously represent the Mauryas as a princely race [2]. Certain forms of the legend describe Chandragupta and Asoka as descendants of the earlier Sisunâga and Nanda dynasties, and it is possible that the first Maurya king may

[1] Oldenberg's edition of the *Dîpavaṁsa*, pp. 146–93; sections vi. 1, 2, 12–15, 18, 23, 24; vii. 8, 14–16, 18; xv. 88; xvi. 5.

[2] *Mahâvaṁsa*, ch. v.: '*Moriyânan Kattiyânan vamsejâtan sirîdharan*,' rendered by Turnour and Wijesiṃha, 'a descendant of the dynasty of Moriyan sovereigns, endowed with illustrious and beneficent attributes, surnamed Chandagutta.'

have been an illegitimate son of the last Nanda, whom he dethroned, but it is, perhaps, more probable that the dynasties of the Nandas and Mauryas were not connected by blood [1].

The authentic history of Asoka closes with the twenty-eighth year of his reign, when he recorded the seventh Pillar Edict, recapitulating the measures taken by him for the propagation of the Law of Piety, the work to which he had devoted the greater part of his long reign. The small supplementary Pillar Edicts, it is true, seem to be somewhat later in date, but they are not of any historical importance.

Asoka always reckons his regnal years from the date of his coronation (*abhisheka*), and he was in the habit of celebrating the anniversary of his coronation by an amnesty to criminals. The Ceylonese tradition which places a considerable interval between the accession and the coronation of Asoka is therefore probably correct, and, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the tradition may be accepted that the coronation took place in the fourth year after Asoka's accession to supreme power. The inscriptions prove that the reign lasted at least twenty-eight years

[1] According to the prose *Asokâvadâna* (Burnouf, pp. 319 *seqq.*), Bindusâra was the son of Nanda. Cp. Hiuen Tsiang's story about the five *Stûpas* at Pâtaliputra (Beal, ii. 94), and Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, p. 186. It is possible, as suggested by Prof. Rhys Davids (*Buddhism*, p. 221), that the Nanda king may have been also known as Asoka, and that some of the contradictions in the Asoka legends may be due to this cause.

after the coronation. The Ceylonese tradition that the total length of the reign from the accession was forty or forty-one years does not seem to be open to objection, and may be provisionally accepted.

The inscriptions record the fact that Asoka had brothers and sisters, but whether or not he was the eldest son of Bindusâra does not appear. He never makes the slightest allusion to his ancestry. He distinguishes two ranks among his sons—the queens' sons, or princes, and the king's sons, the latter evidently being his sons by ladies of inferior rank. His second queen (*devî*) had the name or title of Kârûvakî, and her son was named Tîvara (Tîvala), or, perhaps, Titîvara. Princes of the royal family, probably the king's sons, were stationed as Viceroys or Governors at Taxila in the Panjâb, Ujjain in Central India, Tosali in Kalinga, and Suvarnagiri in the Peninsula. Beyond these few facts our authentic information concerning the family of Asoka does not go [1].

Fâ-hien, the Chinese pilgrim in A.D. 400, gives Dharmavivardhana as the name of the son of Asoka, who ruled over Gandhâra, and must have been the Viceroy at Taxila. The reference seems to be to the person who is in other forms of the legend generally called Kunâla, concerning the blinding of whom a pathetic romance is told, which will be found on a subsequent page. The historian of Kashmîr mentions a son of Asoka named Jalauka as being governor

[1] Pillar Edict VII; Queen's Edict; Detached (Kalinga) Rock Edicts; Siddâpura Minor Rock Edict.

of that province, and a zealous devotee of the Brahmanical gods.

The Vishnu Purâna names Suyasas (*al.* Supârsva) as the son and successor of Asoka, and Dasaratha as the son and successor of Suyasas. The name of Dasaratha is genuine, being confirmed by the inscriptions in the Nâgârjuni caves near Gayâ, which record the bestowal of the caves upon the Ajîvikas by Dasaratha immediately after his accession. The characters of these inscriptions are the same as in those of Asoka, and, considering the fact that the Buddhist traditions affirm that the son of Kunâla immediately succeeded his grandfather, the probability is that Dasaratha was the immediate successor of Asoka, whose benefactions to the Ajîvikas he continued[1].

The Ceylonese chronicles ascribe the conversion of Ceylon to the miraculous proceedings of Mahendra (*Pâlî*, Mahinda), and his sister Sanghamitrâ (Sanghamittâ), the illegitimate children of Asoka by a lady of Vedisagiri, the ruined city of Besnagar near Bhilsa in Central India.

The story of the mission of Mahendra and his sister, although supported in the chronicles of Ceylon by an imposing array of dates, is a tissue of absurdities, and has been rightly rejected as unhistorical by Professor Oldenberg. Most writers have been content

[1] For the Kunâla legend, see Burnouf's and Rajendralâla Mitra's accounts of the *Asokâvadâna*, and Hiuen Tsiang (Beal, i. 139–41). The Dasaratha inscriptions were edited by Bühler (*Ind. Ant.* xx. 361). For notice of Jalauka, see *Ind. Ant.* xviii. 68.

to lop off the miracles, and to accept the residuum of the story as authentic history. Such a method of interpreting a legend does not seem to be consistent with sound principles of historical criticism.

The name of Asoka's daughter Sanghamitrâ, which means 'friend of the Buddhist order,' is extremely suspicious, and the only safe course is to treat the whole tale as a monkish legend. It will be found in the sixth chapter of this volume.

Asoka himself is silent concerning the alleged mission of his son and daughter. In the thirteenth Rock Edict he enumerates the foreign countries to which he has dispatched his missionaries, and includes in the list the Chola and Pândya kingdoms in the extreme south of India, and Ceylon. In the second Rock Edict he mentions Ceylon as one of the foreign countries in which he had disseminated remedies for man and beast. These are the only two passages in which he refers to Ceylon. If there were any truth in the story told by the monks of the island, Asoka would not have been slow to claim the merit of having devoted his son and daughter to religion, and of having converted the king of Ceylon.

Professor Oldenberg has much justification for his opinion that the story of Mahinda and Sanghamittâ seems to have been—

'Invented for the purpose of possessing a history of the Buddhist institutions in the island, and to connect it with the most distinguished person conceivable—the great Asoka. The historical legend is fond of poetically exalting ordinary

occurrences into great and brilliant actions; we may assume that, in reality, things were accomplished in a more gradual and less striking manner than such legends make them appear.'

The naturalization in Ceylon of the immense mass of Buddhist literature must necessarily have been a work of time, and would seem to be the fruit of a period of long and continued intercourse between Ceylon and the adjacent parts of India [1]. Hiuen Tsiang mentions one *stûpa* in the Chola country, and another in the Drâvida or Pândya kingdom, as ascribed to Asoka. Inasmuch as the edicts recognize the independence of the Chola and Pândya territories, these *stûpas*, if really constructed by Asoka, can have been erected only by the friendly co-operation of the local kings. Their existence confirms the statement of the edicts that missionary work was extended into the extreme south of the Peninsula, which was in constant communication with Ceylon [2].

Still more significant is Hiuen Tsiang's testimony concerning the ancient buildings in the kingdom of Malakûta, the country south of the Kâverî (Cauvery). He relates that in this kingdom—

'Some follow the true doctrine, others are given to heresy. They do not esteem learning much, but are wholly given to commercial gain. There are the ruins of many old convents, but only the walls are preserved, and there are few religious

[1] Oldenberg, *Introduction to the Vinayapitakaṁ* (*Mahâvagga*), p. 4 (ii).

[2] Hiuen Tsiang (Beal, ii. 227, 228).

followers. There are many hundred Deva temples, and a multitude of heretics, mostly belonging to the Nirgranthas.

Not far to the east of this city [the capital] is an old *sanghârâma* [monastery] of which the vestibule and court are covered with wild shrubs; the foundation walls only survive. This was built by Mahendra, the younger brother of Asoka-râja.

To the east of this is a *stûpa*, the lofty walls of which are buried in the earth, and only the crowning part of the cupola remains. This was built by Asoka-râja [1].'

This interesting passage proves that, in the days of Asoka and for a considerable period afterwards, the country around Tanjore, the scene of busy commercial activity, was also a centre of Buddhist religious life. Mahendra, it will be observed, is described as being the younger brother of Asoka, not his son, as the Ceylonese monks state. Fâ-hien tells briefly, and with very little supernatural decoration, some anecdotes of this younger brother of Asoka, who found his delight in solitude and quiet [2]. A much more developed form of the story is given by Hiuen Tsiang [3], who adds that the prince was the author of the conversion of Ceylon. 'The kingdom of Simhala,' writes the pilgrim,—

'Formerly was addicted to immoral religious worship, but after the first hundred years following Buddha's death the younger brother of Asoka-râja, Mahendra by name, giving up worldly desires, sought with ardour the fruit of

[1] Hiuen Tsiang (Beal, ii. 231); *Ind. Ant.* xviii. 241.
[2] Fâ-hien, chapter xxvii.
[3] Hiuen Tsiang (Beal, ii. 91–93).

Arhatship. He gained possession of the six supernatural powers and the eight means of liberation; and having the power of instant locomotion, he came to this country. He spread the knowledge of the true law and widely diffused the bequeathed doctrine. From his time there has fallen on the people a believing heart, and they have constructed 100 convents, containing some 20,000 priests. They principally follow the teaching of Buddha, according to the *dharma* of the Sthavira school of the Mahâyâna sect[1].'

Comparison of the two forms of the legend of the miraculous conversion of Ceylon justifies the inference that a principal agent in the conversion of the island was Mahendra, a near relative of the emperor Asoka. The conversion was, of course, much more gradual than it is represented in either form of the legend to have been, and Mahendra cannot have been more than a pioneer in the work. The monuments in Ceylon connected by tradition with the name of Mahendra support the theory that a person bearing that name was really an apostle of Buddhism in the island, and it is certain that the teaching of Gautama had made considerable progress in Ceylon soon after the time of Asoka. The existence in the delta of the Kâverî of a ruined monastery ascribed to Mahendra, the younger brother of Asoka, is some evidence of the real existence of that personage and of his missionary efforts in the south of India. The form of the legend which ascribes the conversion of Ceylon to the younger brother, rather than to the son and daughter, of Asoka has probably a basis of fact.

[1] Hiuen Tsiang, ii. 246.

The edicts prove conclusively that numerous missionaries had been dispatched and had effected extensive conversions previous to the thirteenth year of Asoka's reign. Inasmuch as the emperor joined the Buddhists as a lay disciple for the first time in his ninth year, and did not display much zeal until two and a half years later, the first considerable dispatch of missionaries must have taken place when the emperor had been about eleven years crowned. Ceylon had, therefore, been visited by missionaries in the twelfth year of the reign, before the issue of the second and thirteenth Rock Edicts in the thirteenth year, and the Ceylonese annals are in error in dating the mission to the island eighteen years after the coronation of Asoka.

The so-called Third Council of the Buddhist Church alleged to have been held at Pâtaliputra under the patronage of Asoka, eighteen years after his coronation, and two hundred and thirty-six years after the death of Buddha, is generally treated as an undoubted fact, and as one of the leading events of the reign of Asoka. But the strict historical criticism which rejects the story of Mahinda and Sanghamittâ, along with the Ceylonese chronology anterior to B.C. 160, justifies equal scepticism concerning the alleged Third Council.

The monks of Ceylon relate that the Buddhist canon was first settled at a council held at Râjagriha, then the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, by the leading disciples of the Buddha, immediately after his decease. The Second Council is alleged to have been held at Vaisâli about a century after the death of the

Buddha, primarily to condemn the heretical opinions current at Vaisâli, and, secondarily, to examine and confirm the canon of scripture.

The third Council is said to have been held at Pâtaliputra two hundred and thirty-six years after the death of the Buddha, the coronation of Asoka having taken place eighteen years earlier. This Council is alleged to have been summoned primarily for the suppression of a multitude of pestilent heretics who had caused an interruption of religious services for seven years, and the opportunity was again taken to revise and confirm the sacred canon. Tishya (Tissa) the son of Mudgalya (Moggali), the President of the Council, is alleged to have published the treatise known as the Kathâvatthu at the same time.

Although the tales of the Ceylonese monks have too often been accepted as genuine history, scepticism about their value and incredulity concerning the alleged Councils are nothing new. Many years ago Max Müller wrote:—

'In our time, when even the contemporaneous evidence of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, or Jornandes is sifted by the most uncompromising scepticism, we must not expect a more merciful treatment for the annals of Buddhism. Scholars engaged in special researches are too willing to acquiesce in evidence, particularly if that evidence has been discovered by their own efforts, and comes before them with all the charms of novelty.

But, in the broad daylight of historical criticism, the prestige of such a witness as Buddhaghosha soon dwindles away, and his statements as to kings and councils eight

hundred years before his time are in truth worth no more than the stories told of Arthur by Geoffrey of Monmouth, or the accounts we read in Livy of the early history of Rome[1].'

The wise scepticism of Max Müller concerning the tales of Buddhaghosha is equally applicable to the chronicles known as the Mahâvamsa and Dîpavamsa, of which the last named is the earlier in date, having been composed in the fourth century A. D.

All the three Councils are alike unable to bear the search-light of criticism. Professor Oldenberg, for reasons which need not be here discussed, finds that the story of the First Council is 'not history, but pure invention, and, moreover, an invention of no very ancient date.' Out of the story of the Second Council he selects one part for acceptance and another for rejection, that is to say, he accepts as historical the account of the condemnation of the ten heretical opinions, while he rejects the account of the revision of the canon[2]. Although this finding cannot be regarded as wholly satisfactory, the learned Professor's arguments may be accepted in so far as they prove the unhistorical character of the tale concerning the revision of the canon at the alleged Council of Vaisâli.

The Third Council, which is said to have been held at Pâtaliputra under the patronage of Asoka Maurya,

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 199.

[2] Oldenberg, *Introduction to the Vinayapitakaṁ*, pp. xxvii to xxix.

is accepted by the same critic as an undoubted historical fact. But if such a Council were really held, it is strange that no allusion to it occurs in the Edicts, and that it is ignored by all (or almost all) Indian and Chinese tradition.

The history of the alleged Council of Pâtaliputra practically rests on the authority of the Ceylonese chronicles, which is untrustworthy. The Ceylonese authority requires external support, and such support is not forthcoming. Tissa, the son of Moggali, who is supposed to have been the president of the Council, is wholly unknown to the traditions of China, Tibet, and Nepâl, which substitute for him as the spiritual guide and confessor of Asoka, Upagupta, the son of Gupta, the perfumer.

The legends which will be found in the sixth and seventh chapters of this volume are in some respects common to Upagupta and to Tissa son of Moggali. The legends add to the confusion by mixing the stories of the Second and Third Councils; the saint Yasas, for instance, being mentioned as a prominent personage of both. The result is that, although the inscribed relic caskets of Sânchi demonstrate the existence of an unnamed saint, the son of Moggali, who was approximately contemporary with Asoka, no reliance can be placed on the account of the proceedings of either the Second or the Third Council. The elaborately falsified chronicles of Ceylon have certainly duplicated the real Asoka Maurya by the invention of Kâlâsoka, and it is probable that they have effected

a similar duplication of one real Council. But, whether that Council was really held in the reign of Asoka Maurya at Pâtaliputra, or in the reign of a predecessor, perhaps Chandragupta, at Vaisâli, cannot at present be determined.

Further evidence of the utterly unhistorical character of the narratives of all the three alleged Councils is to be found in the fact that the three narratives are all cast in one mould, and that the procedure for the verification of the canon at all the three assemblies is said to have been identical. The Chinese, moreover, tell of a council held by Kanishka, emperor of Northern India in the latter part of the first century A.D., which is unknown to the Ceylonese. The truth probably is that the Buddhist canon, like the New Testament, grew by a process of gradual accretion and acceptance, with little, if any, help from formal councils in its earlier stages. The statement that certain commentaries were authorized by a Council in the time of Kanishka may well be true, but the earlier councils are not entitled to a place among the events of authentic history.

The stories about the alleged prevalence of heresy during the earlier part of Asoka's reign which caused a suspension of religious ordinances for seven years, and induced the retirement of Tissa the son of Moggali for that period, bear a suspicious resemblance to the tales, undoubtedly false, which ascribe the most horrible cruelties to the emperor prior to his conversion to Buddhism. The object of the ecclesiastical

romancers was, apparently, to heighten the contrast between the period when the emperor was, according to their view, orthodox, and the period when he held other opinions. The Ceylonese versions of the Asoka legend seem to have received a special colouring with the object of enhancing the reputation of the school favoured by the monks of the Mahâvihâra monastery, where both the Dîpavamsa and the Mahâvamsa were composed.

The list of the missionaries dispatched by Asoka to various countries as given in the twelfth chapter of the Mahâvamsa is more deserving of credence than most of the particulars given in that work, being to a considerable extent corroborated by the evidence of inscriptions extracted by Cunningham and Maisey from the *stûpas* at and near Sânchi. The chronicler, who ascribes the credit for the dispatch of the missionaries to the monk Tissa the son of Moggali, instead of to the emperor, enumerates the missions as follows:—

Majjhantika sent to Kashmîr and Gandhâra; Mahâdeva sent to Mahîsamandala (Mysore); Rakkhita sent to Vanavâsi (North Kanara); Yona-Dhammarakkhita sent to Aparantaka (the coast north of Bombay); Majjhima (accompanied by Kassapa, Mâlikâdeva, Dhundhâbhînnossa, and Sahasadeva) sent to Himavanta (the Himâlaya); Sona and Uttara sent to Sovanabhûmi (Pegu); Mahâdhammarakkhita sent to Mahâratta (West Central India); Mahârakkhita sent to the Yona (Yavana) regions, on the north-western

frontier; Mahâ Mahinda (accompanied by Ittiya, Uttiya, Sambala, and Bhaddasâla—all disciples of the son of Moggali) sent to Ceylon.

The relics of Majjhima (Madhyama) and Kassapa (Kâsyapa) were found enshrined together in one casket in No. 2 *stûpa* at Sânchi, and also in another casket at No. 2 *stûpa* of Sonâri, Kassapa being described in the brief inscriptions on the lids as the apostle (*âchârya*) of the Himavanta. *Stûpa* No. 2 at Sânchi also contained relics of the son of Moggali himself. The list of missionaries given in the Mahâvamsa would, therefore, seem to be authentic, subject to the probable correction that Mahinda (Mahendra) should be regarded as the brother, not as the son, of Asoka[1].

The traditional chronology of the reign is of no independent value. The appearance of precision in the dates given by the Ceylonese chroniclers is nothing but a deceptive appearance, and no valid reason exists for accepting either their statement that two hundred and eighteen years elapsed between the accession of Asoka and the death of the Buddha, or the statement that the death of the Buddha occurred in the year B.C. 543. The date of the death of Gautama Buddha must be determined on other grounds, if determined at all. The Chinese pilgrims and the Sanskrit legend books give another set of contradictory chronological data; Târânâth and the Jains supply yet other and

[1] *Mahâvaṁsa*, ch. xii; Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes*, pp. 271 *seqq.*

equally contradictory statements. Nothing can be made of these so-called authorities, which are of use only as occasionally throwing a sidelight on authentic evidence[1].

The Ceylonese dates for the accession and conversion of Asoka are admittedly inconsistent, as they stand, with the evidence of the Edicts, and it is contrary to all rules of sound criticism to select from a single authority one date for acceptance and another for rejection. This uncritical course has been adopted by too many writers on the subject, who pick and choose at will among the dates and figures of the Mahâvamsa and Dîpavamsa. In this work the Ceylonese chronology prior to B.C. 160 is absolutely and completely rejected, as being not merely of doubtful authority, but positively false in its principal propositions.

The earlier Asoka, dubbed Kâlâsoka by the Ceylonese chroniclers, to distinguish him from Dharmâsoka, the great Maurya emperor, appears to be a fiction. The extreme confusion of the legends about Asoka and the existence of several contradictory traditional chronologies give some colour to the theory that a historical basis in the shape of two Asokas should be sought to explain the contradictions. But the supposed Asoka the First remains wrapped in a cloud

[1] Târânâth's account has been translated by Miss E. Lyall from Vassilief's work on Buddhism in *Ind. Ant.* iv. 361. It is hopelessly confused. Prof. Jacobi has edited the Jain *Pariśishṭa-parvan*. For the Nepalese chronology see *Ind. Ant.* xiii. 412. The Chinese pilgrims' notices have been already quoted.

from which he refuses to emerge, and cannot be verified as a fact[1]. History knows only one Asoka, the son of Bindusâra and grandson of Chandragupta, who ruled India for some forty years in the third century B.C.

The real evidence of the date of the historical Asoka is furnished chiefly by two authorities, Justin and the Edicts. This evidence has not been, and cannot be, shaken by any amount of monkish fiction or contradictory legends.

Although Asoka-Priyadarsin is himself silent as to his lineage, the concurrent testimony of Buddhists, Jains, and Hindoos, supported to some extent by the Rudradâman inscription, represents him as being the third sovereign of the Maurya dynasty, and the grandson of Chandragupta, the founder of the dynasty. This evidence may be accepted. Chandragupta was, beyond all question, the contemporary of Seleucus Nikator.

The statements of Justin fix the possible dates of the accession of Chandragupta within very narrow limits.

In this work the year B.C. 321 has been adopted as the date, because it is plain from the words of Justin that the revolt against the Macedonian governors

[1] *Mahâvaṁsa*, ch. iv: 'Sisunâga. He reigned eighteen years. His son Kâlâsoka reigned twenty-eight years. Thus, in the tenth year of the reign of King Kâlâsoka, a century had elapsed from the death of Buddha.' Turnour erroneously gives twenty years as the length of the reign of Kâlâsoka. Wijesiṃha corrects the error. See my papers in *J. R. A. S.* for 1891, for fuller discussion.

of the Panjâb occurred at the earliest possible moment, that is to say, in the cold season following the death of Alexander at Babylon in the summer of B.C. 323. The empire of Alexander was held together solely by his personality, and the moment that the personality of Alexander disappeared, the empire vanished. The revolt headed by Chandragupta must, therefore, have taken place in B.C. 323–22. The recovery of the Panjâb and the usurpation of the throne of Magadha may be assumed to have taken place before the close of B.C. 321, which year may be reasonably taken as that of the accession of Chandragupta.

The duration of twenty-four years assigned to his reign is supported by the authority of the Purânas, the Dîpavamsa, and the Mahâvamsa. This concurrence of Brahmanical and Buddhist literary tradition may be regarded as sufficient proof of the fact alleged. The reign of twenty-five years assigned by the Purânas to Bindusâra fits into the chronological framework better than the period of twenty-eight years assigned by the Mahâvamsa, and has therefore been adopted.

The aggregate period of forty-nine years thus allotted to the two reigns of Chandragupta and his son agrees well with the evidence derived from synchronisms by which the chronology of both Asoka and Chandragupta is satisfactorily determined with a very narrow margin of possible error.

We have already seen that the date of the accession of Chandragupta may be fixed in the year B.C. 321,

because his accession cannot have been very long deferred after the death of Alexander the Great in B.C. 323. This conclusion is supported by the statement of Justin that Chandragupta was already reigning while Seleucus was laying the foundations of his future greatness. Assuming B.C. 321 as the date of the accession of Chandragupta, his grandson Asoka should have ascended the throne forty-nine years later, in B.C. 272.

The thirteenth Rock Edict establishes the synchronism of Asoka with five Hellenistic kings:— Antiochus (II) Theos, of Syria; Ptolemy (II) Philadelphus, of Egypt; Antigonus (II) Gonatas, of Macedonia; Alexander, king of Epirus; and Magas, king of Cyrene.

The latest date at which all these kings were alive together is B.C. 258. The Rock Edicts belong to the thirteenth and fourteenth years of the reign of Asoka reckoned from his coronation, which event, therefore, should have taken place about B.C. 270. The year B.C. 269 is probably nearly correct, and, accepting the tradition that the accession of Asoka preceded his coronation by three complete years, his accession may be placed in B.C. 272, the year obtained by the absolutely independent calculation starting from the accession of Chandragupta.

The synchronism of Chandragupta with Seleucus Nikator and his opponent Antigonus I killed at Ipsus in 301 B.C. harmonizes accurately with the synchronism of Asoka, the grandson of Chandragupta, with Antio-

chus Theos, the grandson of Seleucus Nikator, and with Antigonus Gonatas, the grandson of Antigonus I. The traditional period of forty-nine years for the reigns of Chandragupta and Bindusâra fits accurately in between the two sets of synchronisms.

The chronology of Asoka's reign is consequently firmly established on the foundations laid long ago by Sir William Jones and James Prinsep, and is known with accuracy sufficient for all practical purposes. The margin for error cannot exceed two years.

The following chronological table has been constructed in accordance with the argument above stated in brief.

B. C.	Regnal year of Asoka.	Event.	Authority.
327–25	—	Indian campaigns of Alexander the Great.	Arrian, &c.
325	—	Chandragupta in his youth met Alexander.	Plutarch.
"	—	Satrap Philip murdered by mutinous mercenaries, and the Indian provinces temporarily placed in charge of Eudemus and King Taxiles (Omphis).	Arrian.
323	—	Death of Alexander at Babylon, in May or June.	"
323–22	—	Revolt of Indian province under leadership of Chandragupta.	Justin.
321	—	**Accession of Chandragupta** as emperor of India.	
"	—	Babylon assigned to Seleucus Nikator in second division of Alexander's empire at Triparadeisos.	

B. C.	Regnal year of Asoka.	Event.	Authority.
321	—	Defeat of the Romans by the Samnites at the Caudine Forks.	
316–15	—	Death of Eumenes, formerly secretary to Alexander.	
315	—	Seleucus compelled by Antigonus to retire to Egypt.	
312	—	Recovery of Babylon by Seleucus.	
		Establishment of Seleucidan era (1st October).	
311–6	—	Extension by Seleucus of his power eastward and into India, where he is checked by Chandragupta.	
306	—	Seleucus assumes title of King of Syria.	
circa 305	—	Cession by Seleucus to Chandragupta of the Indian province with a large part of Arianê.	Strabo, &c.
”	—	Mission of Megasthenes.	
302	—	Coalition of Seleucus, Ptolemy, and Lysimachus against Antigonus.	
301	—	Defeat and death of Antigonus at the battle of Ipsus.	
297	—	**Accession of Bindusâra Amitraghâta** as emperor of India.	
circa 296	—	Mission of Deimachus sent by Seleucus.	Strabo.
290	—	Final subjugation of the Samnites by the Romans.	
285	—	Accession of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt.	
280	—	Death of Seleucus Nikator, king of Syria.	
”	—	Accession of Antiochus Soter, his son.	
278 or 277	—	Accession of Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedonia, grandson of Antigonus I.	

B. C.	Regnal year of Asoka.	Event.	Authority.
275	—	Pyrrhus expelled from Italy by the Romans.	
272	—	Accession of Alexander, king of Epirus, son of Pyrrhus, and opponent of Antigonus Gonatas.	
”	—	**Accession of Asoka-Priyadarsin Maurya,** grandson of Chandragupta.	
269	1st	**Coronation** (*abhisheka*) **of Asoka.**	
268	2nd		
267	3rd		
266	4th		
265	5th		
264	6th	Outbreak of First Punic War.	
263	7th		
262	8th		
261	9th	Conquest of Kalinga by Asoka.	Rock E. XIII.
”	”	Asoka becomes a Buddhist lay disciple.	*Ib.* & Minor Rock E. I.
”	”	Accession of Antiochus Theos, king of Syria.	
260	10th		
259	11th	Asoka entered the Buddhist Order, abolished hunting, instituted tours devoted to works of piety, and dispatched missionaries.	Rock E. VIII, Minor Rock E. I, read with Rock E. XIII.
258	12th	Death of Magas, king of Cyrene, half-brother of Ptolemy Philadelphus.	
”	”	(?) Death of Alexander, king of Epirus.	
257	13th	Asoka composed Rock Edicts III and IV.	Rock E. III, IV.
”	”	Dedicated Caves Nos. 1 and 2 at Barâbar to the use of the Brahmanical Ajîvikas.	Barâbar Cave Inscr.
”	”	Instituted quinquennial assemblies for the propagation of the Buddhist Law of Piety (*dharma*).	Rock E. III.

B. C.	Regnal year of Asoka.	Event.	Authority.
256	14th	Asoka published the complete series of the Fourteen Rock Edicts, and the Kalinga Borderers' Edict (No. II Detached).	Rock E. V, and the Borderers' Edict, apparently of same date.
		Asoka appointed Censors of the Law of Piety.	
255	15th	Asoka enlarged for the second time the *stûpa* of Konâkamana Buddha near Kapilavastu.	Niglîva Pillar Inscr.
254	16th	(?) Asoka published the Kalinga Provincials' Edict (No. I Detached).	
253	17th		
252	18th	Asoka published the Minor Rock Edicts, and (?) the Bhabra Edict.	Minor Rock E. I.
,,	,,		
251	19th		
250	20th	Asoka dedicated No. 3 Cave at Barâbar to the use of the Brahmanical Ajîvikas.	Barâbar No. 3 Cave Inscr.
249	21st	Asoka made a pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy places, and erected commemorative pillars at the Lumbini Garden and the *stûpa* of Konâkamana.	Niglîva and Rummindeî Pillar Inscr.
248	22nd		
247	23rd	Death of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt.	
247 or 246	24th	Death of Antiochus II (Theos), king of Syria, and grandson of Seleucus Nikator.	
circa 246	,,	Revolt of Diodotus (Theodotos), and separation of Bactrian kingdom from Syria. (Other authorities give B. C. 250 as the date.)	Cunningham.
245	25th		
244	26th		
243	27th	Asoka composed Pillar Edict VI.	Pillar E. VI.
242	28th	Publication by Asoka of the Seven Pillar Edicts.	Pillar E. VII.

B. C.	Regnal year of Asoka.	Event.	Authority.
242	28th	Death of Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedonia (some authorities give 239 as the date).	
241	29th	Close of First Punic War. Rise of the kingdom of Pergamum.	
240	30th	(?) Asoka published the Supplementary Pillar Edicts.	
239	31st		
238	32nd		
237	33rd		
236	34th		
235	35th		
234	36th		
233	37th		
232	38th	**Death of Asoka**	Mahâvamsa.
"	—	**Accession of Dasaratha**	
"	—	Dedication of the Nâgârjuni caves.	Nâgârjuni Cave Inscr.
circa 188	—	**Extinction of the Maurya Dynasty.**	Vâyu Purâna.

CHAPTER II

Extent and Administration of the Empire

The limits of the vast empire governed successfully by Asoka for so many years can be fixed with sufficient accuracy by means of the statements of the Greek and Latin authors, the internal evidence of the edicts, and the distribution of the monuments, supplemented by tradition[1].

The Indian conquests of Alexander extended to the river Hyphasis, the modern Biâs, in the eastern Panjâb. These were all ceded by Seleucus Nikator to Chandragupta, and Strabo informs us that the cession included a large part of Arianê. This statement may reasonably be interpreted as implying that the limits of the Indian Empire were determined by the natural frontier of the mountain range known by the names of Paropanisus, Indian Caucasus, or Hindoo Koosh, and included the provinces of Arachosia (Western Afghanistan) and Gedrosia (Mekran). The cities of Kâbul, Ghaznî, Kandahâr, and Herât, now

[1] The testimony of the Greek and Latin authors is collected textually in Mr. McCrindle's excellent books, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (Trübner, 1877); and *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, as described by Arrian, Q. Curtius, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Justin* (Constable, 1896).

under the rule of the Amîr of Afghanistan, were, therefore, all comprised within the territories inherited by Asoka from his grandfather.

In the time of Alexander the kingdom of Magadha, the modern Bihâr, the capital of which was first Râjagriha (Râjgîr in the Gayâ District), and subsequently Pâtaliputra (Patna and Bankipore), was the premier kingdom of India, and the last Nanda (variously called Nandrus, Agrammes, and Xandrames) was sovereign both of the Prasii of Bihâr and of the Gangaridae of Bengal. Chandragupta, after his successful campaign in the Panjâb, and his usurpation of the Nanda's throne, made himself master of India, except the extreme south. The Rudradâman inscription indicates that his rule included the Kathiâwâr peninsula on the western coast.

This enormous empire passed, apparently, in peaceful succession to Bindusâra Amitraghâta, and from him to Asoka. The traditions of Kashmîr and Nepâl relate that those countries were included in the Maurya empire. Asoka is remembered as the founder of Srînagar, which is still the capital of Kashmîr, and which replaced the old capital on the site of Pandrethan. Several ruined buildings are also attributed to the great emperor by the local historian, who mentions a son of his named Jalauka, as governor of the province[1]. The fact of the inclusion of Kashmîr in the Maurya empire is confirmed by a wild

[1] Stein, 'Ancient Geography of Kaśmír,' in *J. As. Soc. Bengal*, Part i (1899), pp. 138–40, 158.

legend related by Hiuen Tsiang, which concludes with the statement that 'Asoka Râja, for the sake of the Arhats, built five hundred monasteries, and gave this country [Kashmîr] as a gift to the priesthood[1].'

The inclusion of the Nepalese Tarâi, or lowlands, in the empire is conclusively proved by the inscriptions on the pillars at Niglîva and Rummindeî.

Genuine tradition, not mere literary legend, which is confirmed by the existence of well-preserved monuments, attests with almost equal certainty Asoka's effective possession of the secluded Valley of Nepâl. The pilgrimage described in the last chapter was continued, either through the Chûriâ Ghâtî or the Goramasân Pass, into the enclosed valley of Nepâl, of which the capital was then known by the name of Manju Patan. It occupied the same site as the modern city of Kathmându. Asoka resolved to perpetuate the memory of his visit and to testify to his piety and munificence by the erection of a number of stately monuments, and the foundation of a new city. Pâtan, Bhatgaon, and Kîrtipur, which at various dates in later ages severally became the capitals of mountain kingdoms, were not then in existence. Asoka selected as the site of his new city some rising ground about two miles to the south-east of the ancient capital, and there built the city now known as Lalita Patan. Exactly in its centre he built a temple, which is still standing near the south

[1] Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, i. 150.

side of the palace or 'Darbâr,' and at each of the four sides of the city, facing the cardinal points, he erected four great hemispherical *stûpas*, which likewise remain to this day. Two small shrines and a tomb at Lalita Patan are also ascribed to Asoka. The emperor was accompanied in his pilgrimage by his daughter Chârumatî, the wife of a Kshatriya named Devapâla. She devoted herself to religion, and remained in Nepâl as a nun, residing at a convent which she built at Pasupatinâth, a mile or two north of Kathmându, and which still exists, and bears her name [1].

The Buddhist legends all seem to imply that the seaport of Tamralipti (the modern Tamlûk in the Midnapur District, thirty-five miles from Calcutta), where travellers from Ceylon landed, was part of the Maurya dominions, and this inference is supported by the fact that Chandragupta took over from his predecessor Nanda the sovereignty of the country of the Gangaridae, or Bengal, which probably included Tamralipti.

Asoka, therefore, inherited an empire which extended from sea to sea. But at his accession, the kingdom of Kalinga, stretching along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, from the Mahânadî river on the north, to the south as far, perhaps, as Pulicat, was still independent. In the ninth year of the reign this region was conquered and permanently annexed [2].

[1] Bhagwân Lâl Indrajî and Bühler, 'History of Nepâl,' in *Ind. Ant.*, Dec. 1884, xiii. 412 *seqq.*; and Oldfield, *Sketches from Nipal*, ii. 246-8.

[2] Rock Edict XIII.

The southern limits of the empire are fixed by the occurrence of the Siddâpura inscriptions in the Mysore State (about N. lat. 14° 50′), and by the enumeration in the edicts of the nations in the south of the peninsula which retained their independence.

The Chola kings in those days had their capital at Uraiyûr near Trichinopoly, and ruled over the south-east of the peninsula. The capital of the Pândya kingdom, farther south, was at Madura; and the Malabâr coast, between the Western Ghâts and the sea, down to Cape Comorin, was known as the kingdom of Kerala[1]. All these three kingdoms are, like Ceylon, recognized by Asoka as independent powers, outside the limits of his dominions.

The southern boundary of the Maurya empire may be defined, with a near approach to accuracy, as a line connecting Pondicherry on the east coast with Cannanore on the west, or, approximately, as the twelfth degree of north latitude. North of this line, as far as the Himâlayas and the Hindoo Koosh, all India acknowledged either the direct rule or the overlordship of Asoka.

This definition of the extent of the Maurya empire, which exceeded the area of British India, excluding Burma, is supported by the distribution of the rock inscriptions and by Hiuen Tsiang's enumeration of the monuments ascribed to Asoka.

The rock inscriptions cover the area bounded by

[1] Sewell, 'Sketch of the Dynasties of Southern India,' in *Archaeol. Survey of S. India*, ii. 154, 195, and 214.

the lower Himâlayas, the Bay of Bengal, Mysore, and the Arabian sea.

Hiuen Tsiang enumerates in detail about one hundred and thirty *stûpas* ascribed to Asoka, besides mentioning in general terms many other edifices referred by tradition to his reign. A few of the *stûpas* stood in independent territory, where their erection must have been dependent on the goodwill and permission of the local sovereigns, but the great majority were situated in provinces which belonged to the empire. Three are mentioned as existing in the country now known as Afghanistan. The Pilusâra *stûpa*, a hundred feet high, was at Kapisa, and a wonderful stone *stûpa*, beautifully adorned and carved, three hundred feet in height, was the glory of Nagarahâra near Jalâlabad. A small *stûpa*, also the gift of Asoka, stood to the south of this stupendous monument. Other notable *stûpas* existed in the Swât valley, and Taxila possessed three. Four *stûpas* built by Asoka graced the capital of Kashmîr, and legend ascribed to him the erection of five hundred monasteries in that country.

On the east coast, *stûpas* built by Asoka are recorded as existing at Tamralipti (Tamlûk), at the capital of Samatata (probably in the Sunderbunds), in Orissa, and in Kalinga.

On the west side of India Valabhi in Gûjarât, and the province of Sind, with its dependencies, were rich in monuments ascribed to the great Maurya. The Rudradâman inscription records the fact that his

Persian governor of Kathiâwâr made the canals in connexion with the Girnâr lake which had been formed in the time of Chandragupta[1]. In the province of Arachosia (Tsaukûta), of which the capital is plausibly identified with Ghaznî, ten *stûpas* were regarded as the work of Asoka.

In the south he erected a *stûpa* at the capital of the Drâvida country, the modern Conjeeveram, and another at the capital of the Andhra territory, the modern Vengi, forty-three miles south-west of Madras.

The edicts refer to Antiochus Theos, king of Syria, as a neighbouring potentate, and so agree with the other evidence which indicates the Hindoo Koosh as the north-western frontier of the empire.

Asoka's empire, therefore, comprised all India proper from the twelfth degree of latitude to the Himâlayas, and included the valley of Nepâl, the valley of Kashmîr, the Swât valley and adjoining regions, the Yusufzâi country, Afghanistan as far as the Hindoo Koosh, Sind, and Balûchistan.

The machinery for the government and administration of this vast empire will now be examined.

The historian is justified in assuming that the system of government developed by the genius of Chandragupta, the first emperor of India, was preserved intact in its main features, although supplemented by some novel institutions, and modified by certain reforms, in the reign of his grandson.

[1] *Ind. Ant.* vii. 257-63; and (inaccurately) in *Prâkrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kattywar* (Bhavnagar, *n. d.*).

Megasthenes has recorded a tolerably full account of the institutions of Chandragupta, and a combination of his account with the evidence of the edicts throws much light upon the organization of Asoka's empire.

The king's power was, of course, absolute, and all institutions depended on his will. The royal will was communicated to the lieges through the agency of a bureaucracy, at the head of which stood the Viceroys, generally sons or other near relatives of the sovereign.

One of these great officers had his seat of government at the famous city of Taxila, now represented by the ruins at Shâh Dheri in the Râwalpindi District of the Panjâb. All the territories west of the Satlej as far as the Hindoo Koosh may have been within his jurisdiction. Another princely Viceroy ruled Western India from the ancient city of Ujjain in Mâhwa. According to tradition, Asoka himself held this government when the news of his father's mortal illness reached him, and obliged him to hasten to the capital in order to secure the succession.

A third Viceroy, stationed at Suvarnagiri, the site of which has not yet been identified, represented the emperor in Peninsular India. The conquered province of Kalinga was controlled by a fourth prince stationed at Tosali, of which the site is not known with certainty; it may be represented by Jaugada [1].

[1] The epigraphical authority for the four princely Viceroys is to be found in the Detached Edicts of Dhauli, so-called Nos. I and II; and the Siddâpura Minor Rock Edict.

The home provinces were probably administered by local governors acting under the direct orders of the emperor.

The officials next in rank to the Viceroys, so far as can be inferred from the language of the edicts, were the *Rajjûkas* or Commissioners, 'set over hundreds of thousands of souls.' Below them were the *Pradesikas* or District officers.

Magistrates in general were designated by the term *Mahâmâtra*, and this generic term, in combination with determinative words, was also applied to special departmental officers, as, for instance, the Censors of the Law of Piety, who were known as *Dhamma-mahâmâtras*. These Censors, who were for the first time appointed by Asoka in the fourteenth year of the reign, as recited in the fifth Rock Edict, had instructions to concern themselves with all sects, and to promote the advance of the principles of the Law of Piety among both the subjects of His Majesty and the semi-independent border tribes of Yonas, Gandhâras, and others. They were directed in general terms to care for the happiness of the lieges, and especially to redress cases of wrongful confinement or unjust corporal punishment, and were empowered to grant remissions of sentence in cases where the criminal was entitled to consideration by reason of advanced years, sudden calamity, or the burden of a large family. These officials were further charged with the delicate duty of superintending the female establishments of the members of the royal family both at the capital

and in the provincial towns. In conjunction with other officials the Censors acted as royal almoners and distributed the gifts made by the sovereign and his queens and relatives.

Special superintendents or Censors of the Women are also mentioned, and it is not easy to understand how their duties were distinguished from those of the Censors of the Law of Piety.

All these special officers were supplementary to the regular magistracy. The extreme vagueness in the definition of the duties entrusted to them must have caused a considerable amount of friction between them and the ordinary officials.

The Censors probably exercised jurisdiction in cases where animals had been killed or mutilated contrary to regulations, or gross disrespect had been shown by a son to his father or mother, and so forth. They also took cognizance of irregularities in the conduct of the royal ladies. The general duty of repressing unlawful indulgences of the fair sex seems to have fallen to the Censors of Women, who, no doubt, were also responsible for the due regulation of the courtesans. Megasthenes testifies that the official reporters did not scorn to make use of information supplied by the public women.

Asoka mentions that he had appointed many classes of officials for various departmental purposes. Allusion is made to certain inspectors whose duties are not clearly explained. The wardens of the marches are mentioned as being a special class of officials.

The emperor attached the highest importance to the necessity of being accessible to the aggrieved subject at any place and at any hour, and undertook to dispose at once of all complaints and reports without regard to his personal convenience. In these orders (Rock Edict VI), Asoka only confirmed and emphasized the practice of his grandfather, who used to remain in court the whole day, without allowing the interruption of business, even while his attendants practised massage on him with ebony rollers. He continued to hear cases while the four attendants rubbed him [1].

The Indian emperor, like most Oriental sovereigns, relied much upon the reports of news-writers employed by the Crown for the purpose of watching the executive officers of Government, and reporting everything of note which came to their knowledge. The emperor seems to have had reason to be suspicious, for it is recorded that Chandragupta could not venture to sleep in the daytime, and at night was obliged to change his bedroom from time to time as a precaution against treachery [2]. Asoka probably continued the routine of court life laid down by his great ancestor.

The standing army, maintained at the king's cost, was formidable in numbers, comprising, according to Pliny, 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, and 9,000 elephants, besides chariots; and was, with reference to the standard of antiquity, very highly organized.

The War Office was directed by a commission of

[1] Strabo, xv. 1, 53–6, in McCrindle's *Ancient India*, p. 72.

[2] Ibid., p. 71.

thirty members, divided into six boards each containing five members, with departments severally assigned as follows:

Board No. 1: Admiralty, in co-operation with the Admiral;

Board No. 2: Transport, commissariat, and army service, including the provision of drummers, grooms, mechanics, and grass-cutters;

Board No. 3: Infantry;

Board No. 4: Cavalry;

Board No. 5: War-chariots;

Board No. 6: Elephants.

The arms, when not in use, were stored in arsenals, and ranges of stables were provided for the horses and elephants. Chariots, when on the march, were drawn by oxen, in order to spare the horses. Each war-chariot, which had a team of either two or four horses harnessed abreast, carried two fighting-men besides the driver. The chariot used as a state conveyance was drawn by four horses. Each war-elephant carried three fighting-men in addition to the driver. Arrian gives some interesting details concerning the equipment of the infantry and cavalry, which may be quoted verbatim:—

'I proceed now,' he says, 'to describe the mode in which the Indians equip themselves for war, premising that it is not to be regarded as the only one in vogue. The foot-soldiers carry a bow made of equal length with the man who bears it. This they rest upon the ground, and pressing against it with their left foot thus discharge the arrow, having drawn the string far backwards; for the shaft they

use is little short of being three yards long, and there is nothing which can resist an Indian archer's shot—neither shield nor breastplate, nor any stronger defence if such there be. In their left hand they carry bucklers of undressed ox-hide, which are not so broad as those who carry them, but are about as long. Some are equipped with javelins instead of bows, but all wear a sword, which is broad in the blade, but not longer than three cubits; and this, when they engage in close fight (which they do with reluctance), they wield with both hands, to fetch down a lustier blow. The horsemen are equipped with two lances like the lances called *saunia*, and with a shorter buckler than that carried by the foot-soldiers. But they do not put saddles on their horses, nor do they curb them with bits like the bits in use among the Greeks or the Kelts, but they fit on round the extremity of the horse's mouth a circular piece of stitched raw ox-hide studded with pricks of iron or brass pointing inwards, but not very sharp; if a man is rich he uses pricks made of ivory. Within the horse's mouth is put an iron prong like a skewer, to which the reins are attached. When the rider, then, pulls the reins, the prong controls the horse, and the pricks which are attached to this prong goad the mouth, so that it cannot but obey the reins [1].'

The civil administration, of which some features mentioned in the edicts have been already noticed, was an organization of considerable complexity, and

[1] 'Indika,' xvi, in *Ancient India*, p. 220. For shapes of Indian arms at the beginning of the Christian era, see Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 217, and Pl. xxxiii; and Maisey, *Sânchi*, Pl. xxxv, xxxvi. Cf. woodcut of Veddah drawing his bow in Tennant's *Ceylon*, 3rd ed., i. 499. A nearly life-size figure of an infantry soldier armed as described by Megasthenes is given in Cunningham, *Stûpa of Bharhut*, Pl. xxxii, 1.

apparently not inferior to that elaborated by Sher Shah and Akbar. We read of an Irrigation Department, which performed functions similar to those of the analogous department in Egypt, regulating the rivers and controlling the sluices so as to distribute the canal water fairly among the farmers. The long inscription of Rudradâman, executed in A.D. 150, records how Tushasp, the Persian governor of Saurâshtra (Kathiâwâr) on behalf of Asoka, constructed canals and bridges to utilize the water of the great artificial lake at Girnâr which had been formed in the reign of Chandragupta[1]. This instance shows the care that was taken to promote agricultural improvement and to develop the land revenue, even in a remote province distant more than a thousand miles from the capital.

The revenue officers were charged with the collection of the land revenue, or Crown rent, then as now, the mainstay of Indian finance. All agricultural land was regarded as Crown property. According to one account the cultivators retained one-fourth of the produce; according to another (which is more probable), they paid into the treasury one-fourth of the produce in addition to a rent of unspecified amount.

The castes, whose occupation connected them with the land, such as woodcutters, carpenters, blacksmiths, and miners, were subject to the supervision of the revenue officers.

Roads were maintained by the royal officers, and

[1] See note, p. 72.

pillars were erected on the principal highways to serve as mile-stones at intervals of about an English mile and a quarter. Examples of similar pillars (*kos mînâr*), erected many centuries later by the Mughal emperors, still exist [1]. Asoka prided himself on having further consulted the comfort of travellers by planting shady trees and digging wells at frequent intervals along the main roads [2].

Pâtaliputra, the capital city, stood at the confluence of the Sôn and Ganges, on the southern bank of the latter river, in the position now occupied by the large native city of Patna and the civil station of Bankipore. The river Sôn has changed its course, and now joins the Ganges near the cantonment of Dinapore (Dhânapur) above Bankipore, but its old course can be easily traced. The ancient city, like its modern successor, was a long and narrow parallelogram, about nine miles in length and a mile and a half in breadth. The wooden walls seen by Megasthenes, which were

[1] The officers 'construct roads, and at every ten *stadia* set up a pillar to show the byroads and distances' (Strabo, xv. 1. 50–2, in *Ancient India*, p. 86). The *stadium* in use at that period was equal to 202¼ yards; ten *stadia*, therefore, = 2022½ yards. The Mughal *kos*, the interval between the still existing *kos mînârs*, or pillars, averages 4558 yards (Elliot, *Suppl. Glossary*, *s. v.* kos). The Asoka pillars were therefore set up at every half *kos*, approximately, according to the Mughal computation.

[2] Rock Edict II, and Pillar Edict VII. It is expressly recorded that the wells were dug at intervals of half a *kos* each, the same interval which is approximately expressed by Megasthenes as ten *stadia*.

protected by a wide and deep moat, were pierced by sixty-four gates and crowned by five hundred and seventy towers. Asoka built an outer masonry wall, and beautified the city with innumerable stone buildings so richly decorated, that in after ages they were ascribed to the genii. The greater part of the ancient city still lies buried in the silt of the rivers under Patna and Bankipore at a depth of from ten to twenty feet. In several places the remains of the wooden palisade mentioned by Megasthenes have been exposed by casual excavations, and numerous traces have been found of massive brick and magnificent stone buildings. A few of the brick edifices in a ruined condition are still above ground, and it would probably be possible, by a careful survey conducted under competent supervision, to identify with certainty the sites of the principal Asoka buildings mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims. Owing to the want of such a survey, the identifications made by Major Waddell, I.M.S., who is entitled to the credit of discovering the fact that Pâtaliputra still exists, are not altogether convincing, although many of them may be correct.

The excavations, as far as they have been carried, fully confirm the accuracy of the accounts given by Megasthenes and the Chinese pilgrims of the extent and magnificence of the Maurya capital[1].

[1] Arrian, *Indika*, x, in *Ancient India*, pp. 68 and 205; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* vi. 22, ibid. p. 139; Solinus, 52, 6–17, ibid. p. 155; Waddell, *Discovery of the Exact Site of Asoka's Classic Capital*

The administration of this great and splendid city was organized with much elaboration. Like the War Office, the metropolis was administered by a commission of thirty members divided into six Boards with five members each. The first Board was charged with the superintendence of the industrial arts and artisans. The second was entrusted with the duty of superintending foreigners, and attending to their wants. This Board provided medical aid for foreigners in case of sickness, with decent burial in case of death, and administered the estates of the deceased, remitting the net proceeds to the persons entitled. The same Board was also bound to provide proper escort for foreigners leaving the country. The third Board was responsible for the registration of births and deaths, which was enforced both for revenue purposes and for the information of the Government.

The fourth Board was the Board of Trade, which exercised a general superintendence over trade and commerce, and regulated weights and measures. It is said that the authorities took care that commodities were sold in the proper season by public notice, which probably means that price lists were officially fixed, according to the usual Indian custom. Any trader who desired to deal in more than one class of goods was obliged to pay double licence tax.

The fifth Board was concerned with manufactures,

of Pâtaliputra, the Palibothra of the Greeks, and Description of the Superficial Remains (Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1892, price one rupee).

the sale of which was subjected to regulations similar to those governing the sales of imported goods.

The sixth Board was charged with the duty of levying a tithe on the prices of all articles sold. Evasion of this tax was punishable by death[1]. This sanguinary law is but one of several indications that the penal code of Chandragupta was one of extreme severity. The same code seems to have been administered by Asoka, with slight mitigations.

The general severity of the government of Chandragupta is testified to by Justin, who says that that prince, who freed his countrymen from the Macedonian yoke, 'after his victory forfeited by his tyranny all title to the name of liberator, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thraldom[2].' In addition to the law about evasion of municipal taxes just quoted, other illustrations of the extreme severity of the penal law are on record. When the king was on a hunting expedition, any person, man or woman, who went inside the ropes marking off the path of the royal procession was capitally punished. The same formidable penalty was attached to the offence of causing the loss of a hand or eye to an artisan, the reason apparently being that skilled workmen were regarded as being specially devoted to the king's

[1] Strabo, xv. 1, 50–52, in *Ancient India*, p. 86.

[2] Justin, xv. 4, in McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 327. See also Watson's translation (Bohn), p. 142.

service. In other cases wounding by mutilation was punishable by the amputation of the corresponding member of the offender, in addition to the loss of his right hand. The crime of giving false evidence was punished by mutilation of the extremities. According to one writer, some unspecified heinous offences were punished by the shaving of the offender's hair, which penalty was regarded as specially infamous [1].

The mitigations of this sanguinary code introduced by Asoka the Humane were not very material. Late in his reign he ordained that every criminal condemned to death should have three days' respite before execution to enable him to prepare for the other world, but the edict does not indicate any diminution in the number of capital offences or of the convicts condemned to death. The censors of the Law of Piety were commanded to redress cases of wrongful imprisonment or undeserved corporal punishment, and were empowered to remit sentence when the offender deserved mercy by reason of advanced age, sudden calamity, or the burden of a large family dependent on him for support. The actions of the censors in pursuance of these instructions cannot have had much practical effect. On each anniversary of his solemn coronation Asoka was in the habit of pardoning criminals awaiting execution, but, considering the fact that no condemned prisoner ever had more than three days' respite between sentence and execution, the number

[1] Nicolas Damasc. 44; Stobaeus, *Serm.* 42, in McCrindle's *Ancient India*, p. 73.

who benefited by the royal clemency cannot have been very great[1]. So far as the evidence goes, it indicates that Asoka maintained in substance the stern penal legislation and summary procedure of his illustrious grandfather, who had governed by despotism the empire won by bloodshed.

It would, however, be rash to infer from these premises that the professed humanity of Asoka was hypocritical. The temper of the times and the universal custom of Oriental monarchies demanded severity in the punishment, and dispatch in the adjudication, of crime as indispensable characteristics of an efficient government. Asoka deserves credit for inculcating on his officers principles which, if followed, must have resulted in improved administration of justice, and for measures which in some degree mitigated the ferocity of established practice.

The so-called Detached Edicts of Dhauli and Jangada, addressed to the governors and magistrates of the conquered province of Kaḷinga, display the sovereign's earnest desire for merciful and considerate administration.

The mere extent of the empire which was transmitted from Chandragupta to Bindusâra, and from Bindusâra to Asoka, is good evidence that the organization of the government, which was strong enough in military force to defeat foreign attacks, and to sub-

[1] Pillar Edict IV: 'To prisoners who have been convicted and condemned to death I grant a respite of three days before execution.'

due an extensive kingdom, was also adequate for the performance of civil duties. Pâtaliputra, situated in an eastern province, continued throughout the reigns of the three imperial Mauryas to be the capital of an empire exceeding British India in area, and extending from sea to sea. The emperor, though destitute of the powerful aids of modern civilization, was able to enforce his will at Kâbul, distant twelve hundred, and at Girnâr, distant a thousand miles from his capital. He was strong enough to sheathe his sword in the ninth year of his reign, to treat unruly border tribes with forbearance, to cover his dominions with splendid buildings, and to devote his energies to the diffusion of morality and piety.

How long the efforts of Asoka continued to bear fruit after the close of his protracted and brilliant reign we know not. Envious time has dropped an impenetrable veil over the deeds of his successors, and no man can tell the story of the decline and fall of the Maurya empire.

CHAPTER III

The Monuments

The extravagant legend which ascribes to Asoka the erection of eighty-four thousand *stûpas*, or sacred cupolas, within the space of three years, proves the depth of the impression made on the popular imagination by the magnitude and magnificence of the great Maurya's architectural achievements. So imposing were his works that they were universally believed to have been wrought by supernatural agency.

'The royal palace and halls in the midst of the city (Pâtaliputra), which exist now as of old, were all made by spirits which he employed, and which piled up the stones, reared the walls and gates, and executed the elegant carving and inlaid sculpture-work, in a way which no human hands of this world could accomplish[1].'

Thus wrote the simple-minded Fâ-hien at the beginning of the fifth century. A little more than two hundred years later, when Hiuen Tsiang travelled, the ancient city was deserted and in ruins, the effect of the departure of the court and the ravages of the White Huns. Now,

> 'The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples,'

[1] Chap. xxvii, Legge's translation.

lie buried deep beneath the silt of the Ganges and Sôn rivers, and serve as a foundation for the East Indian Railway, the city of Patna, and the civil station of Bankipore.

No example of the secular architecture of Asoka's reign has survived in such a condition as to permit of its plan and style being studied. The remains of the Maurya palace undoubtedly lie hid under the fields and houses of the village of Kumrâhâr, south of the railway line connecting Bankipore and Patna, but the slight excavations which have been undertaken do not suffice to render the remains intelligible, and the expense of adequate exploration would be prohibitive [1].

The numerous and stately monasteries which Asoka erected at many places in the empire have shared the fate of his palaces, and not even one survives in a recognizable state.

The *stûpas*, or cupolas, on which the emperor lavished so much treasure, have been more fortunate, and a large group of monuments of this class at Sânchi in Central India has been preserved in a tolerably complete state [2].

A *stûpa* was usually destined either to enshrine the relics of a Buddha or saint, or to mark the scene of

[1] Waddell, *Discovery of the Exact Site of Asoka's Classic Capital of Pâtaliputra* (Calcutta, 1892); and an unpublished report by Bâbû P. C. Mukharjî.

[2] Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes* (London, 1854); *Reports*, x. 57; *Epigraphia Indica* (Bühler), ii. 87, 366.

some event famous in the history of the Buddhist church. Sometimes it was built merely in honour of a Buddha. In Asoka's age a *stûpa* was a solid hemispherical mass of masonry, springing from a plinth which formed a perambulating path for worshippers, and was flattened at the top to carry a square altar-shaped structure, surmounted by a series of stone umbrellas. The base was usually surrounded by a stone railing, of which the pillars, bars, and coping-stones were commonly, though not invariably, richly carved and decorated with elaborate sculptures in relief.

The great *stûpa* at Sânchi was a solid dome of brick and stone, 106 feet in diameter, springing from a plinth 14 feet high, and with a projection of 5½ feet from the base of the dome. The apex of the dome was flattened into a terrace 34 feet in diameter, surrounded by a stone railing, within which stood a square altar or pedestal surrounded by another railing. The total height of the building, when complete, must have exceeded 100 feet.

Many of Asoka's *stûpas* were much loftier. Hiuen Tsiang mentions one in Afghanistan which was 300 feet in height, and in Ceylon one famous *stûpa*, when perfect, towered to a height exceeding 400 feet.

The base of the great Sânchi *stûpa* was surrounded by a massive stone railing nearly 10 feet high, forming a cloister or passage round the sacred monument. This railing, which is very highly decorated, is later than Asoka's time.

Several of the *stûpas* at and near Sânchi were opened and found to contain relic caskets hidden inside the mass of masonry. In No. 2 the relic chamber was discovered 2 feet to the westward of the centre, and 7 feet above the terrace. Inside the chamber was a sandstone box, 11 inches long, and 9½ inches high, which contained four small steatite vases, in which fragments of bone had been enshrined. Numerous inscriptions vouched for these relics as belonging to some of the most famous saints of the Buddhist church, including two of the missionaries named in the Mahâvamsa as the apostles of the Himalayan region, and the son of Moggali (Maudgalya), presumably Tissa, who, according to the Ceylonese chronicle, presided over the third Council.

A very interesting relic of the age of Asoka was discovered by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1873 at a village named Bharhut (Barahut) in Baghelkhand, about ninety-five miles south-west from Allahabad [1]. He found there the remains of a brick *stûpa* of moderate size, nearly 68 feet in diameter, surrounded by an elaborately carved stone railing bearing numerous inscriptions in characters similar to those of the Asoka edicts. The *stûpa* had been covered with a coat of plaster, in which hundreds of triangular-shaped recesses had been made for the reception of lights for the illumination of the monument. On festival

[1] Cunningham, *The Stûpa of Bharhut* (London, 1879). The distance of 120 miles from Allahabad, stated by Cunningham, is not correct according to the maps, including his.

occasions it was the practice of the Buddhists to decorate *stûpas* in every possible way, with flowers, garlands, banners, and lights.

The railing of the Bharhut *stûpa* was a little more than 7 feet high, and was divided into four quadrants by openings facing the cardinal points. Each opening was approached by an ornamental gateway of the kind called *toran*. The beams of each *toran* were supported on composite pillars, each composed of four octagonal shafts joined together. Each of these shafts is crowned by a distinct bell capital. The four bell capitals are covered by a single abacus, on which rests a massive upper capital formed of two lions and two bulls, all couchant. Although the remains of the ornamental gateways or *torans* at Bharhut are very imperfect, enough is left to prove that these elaborate structures closely resembled the better preserved examples of later date at Sânchi. The complete cast of one of the Sânchi gates exhibited in the Indian Museum at South Kensington serves as an illustration of the similar gateways at Bharhut. Such of the Bharhut sculptures as were saved from the ruthless hands of the villagers were conveyed to Calcutta, where they now form one of the chief treasures of the Imperial Museum. One of the gateways has been partially restored, and portions of two quadrants of the railing have been set up beside it, in order to convey to visitors an idea of the nature of the structure.

The railing was composed of pillars, three cross-bars,

or rails, and a heavy coping Each of the pillars is a monolith bearing a central medallion on each face, with a half medallion at the top and another at the bottom. Every member of the railing is covered with elaborate sculpture, which is of exceptional interest for the history of Buddhism, because it is to a large extent interpreted by explanatory contemporary inscriptions.

The remains of very similar railings of Asoka's age exist at Buddha Gayâ; and Bâbû P. C. Mukharjî found parts of at least three different stone railings at Patna, some of which may be even earlier in date than Asoka [1].

Besnagar near Sânchi, the ancient Vedisagiri, the home, according to the legend, of Devî the mother of Mahendra and Sanghamitrâ, son and daughter of Asoka, has yielded specimens of another sculptured railing of Maurya age, bearing dedicatory inscriptions [2].

In ancient India both the Buddhists and the Jains were in the habit of defraying the cost of expensive religious edifices by subscription, each donor or group of donors being given the credit of having contributed a particular pillar, coping-stone, or other portion of the edifice on which the name of the donor was inscribed. It is interesting to find that the same

[1] Bâbû P. C. Mukharjî's discoveries are described in an unpublished report. For Buddha Gayâ, see Cunningham, *Mahâbodhi* (London, 1892), Râjendralâla Mitra, *Buddha Gayâ*, and Cunningham, *Reports*, vols. i, iii, viii, xi, xvi.

[2] Cunningham, *Reports*, x. 38.

practice of crediting individual donors with the presentation of single pillars existed in Hellenistic Asia. At the temple of Labranda in Caria, dating from the reign of Nero, or a little later, Sir Charles Fellows found twelve fluted columns, each of which bore a panel recording that it was the gift of such and such a person [1]. The subscriptions of course must have been collected in cash, and the work must have been carried out by the architect in accordance with a general plan. The record of individual donors was intended not only to gratify their vanity and the natural desire for the perpetuation of their names, but to secure for them and their families an accumulation of spiritual merit. The Indian inscriptions frequently express this latter purpose.

In addition to the statues of animals on the summit of monolithic pillars which will be described presently, a few specimens of sculpture in the round belonging to the Maurya period have been preserved in a tolerably complete state.

Of these rare specimens one of the most remarkable is the colossal statue of a man seven feet in height found at Parkham, a village between Mathurâ and Agra. This work is executed in grey sandstone highly polished. The arms are unfortunately broken, and the face is mutilated. The dress, which is very peculiar, consists of a loose robe confined by two bands, one below the breast and the other round the loins [2].

[1] Fellows, *Asia Minor*, pp. 261, 331, and plate (London, 1838).
[2] Cunningham, *Reports*, xx. 40, Pl. vi.

A colossal female statue of the same period found at Besnagar, 6 feet 7 inches in height, is of special interest as being the only specimen of a female statue in the round that has yet been discovered of so early a period [1].

A standing statue of a saint with a halo, which crowned the northern detached pillar near the great *stûpa* at Sânchi, is considered by Cunningham to be one of the finest specimens of Indian sculpture [2].

Asoka had a special fondness for the erection of monolithic pillars on a gigantic scale, and erected them in great numbers, inscribed and without inscriptions. Two, one at the southern, and the other at the northern entrance, graced the approaches to the great *stûpa* of Sânchi. The northern pillar, which supported the statue of the saint, was about 45 feet in height; the southern pillar, which was crowned by four lions standing back to back, was some 5 feet lower. Both pillars, like the other monuments of the same class, are composed of highly polished, fine sandstone. The monolithic shaft of the southern pillar was 32 feet in height.

The Sânchi pillars, of which the southern one bears a mutilated inscription, corresponding with part of the Kausâmbî Edict on the Allahabad pillar, have been thrown down and suffered much injury. Two only of Asoka's monolithic pillars still stand in a condition practically perfect; one at Bakhira near Basâṛ in the

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, x. 44.

[2] *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 197, Pl. x.

Muzaffarpur District, and the other at Lauriyâ-Nandangarh (Navandgarh) in the Champâran District. A detailed description of these two monuments will suffice to give the reader an adequate idea of the whole class.

The Bakhira pillar is a monolith of fine sandstone, highly polished for its whole length of 32 feet above the water level. A square pedestal with three steps is said to exist under water. The shaft tapers uniformly from a diameter of 49·8 inches at the water level to 38·7 at the top. The principal member of the capital is bell-shaped in the Persepolitan style, 2 feet 10 inches in height, and is surmounted by an oblong abacus 12 inches high, which serves as a pedestal for a lion seated on its haunches, 4½ feet in height.

Two or three mouldings are inserted between the shaft and the bell capital, and one intervenes between the latter and the abacus.

The total height above the water level is 44 feet 2 inches. Including the submerged position the length of the monument must be about 50 feet, and the gross weight is estimated to be about 50 tons[1].

In general design the Lauriyâ-Nandangarh pillar resembles that at Bakhira, but is far less massive. The polished shaft, which is 32 feet 9½ inches in height, diminishes from a base diameter of 35½ inches to a diameter at the top of 22¼ inches. The abacus is circular, and is decorated on the edge with a bas-relief

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, i. 56; xvi. 12.

representing a row of geese pecking their food. The height of the capital, including the lion, is 6 feet 10 inches. The whole monument, therefore, is nearly 40 feet in height (*Frontispiece*)[1].

The mutilated pillar at Râmpurwâ in the same district is a duplicate of that at Lauriyâ-Nandangarh. The capital of this pillar was attached to the shaft by a barrel-shaped bolt of pure copper, measuring 2 feet and half an inch in length, with a diameter of $4\frac{5}{16}$ inches in the centre, and $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches at each end. This bolt was accurately fitted into the two masses of stone without cement[2].

The circular abacus of the Allahabad pillar is decorated, instead of the geese, with a graceful scroll of alternate lotus and honeysuckle, resting on a beaded astragalus moulding, perhaps of Greek origin[3].

Asoka's monoliths frequently are placed in situations hundreds of miles distant from quarries capable of supplying the fine sandstone of which they are composed. The massiveness and exquisite finish of these huge monuments bear eloquent testimony to the skill and resource of the architects and stonecutters of the Maurya age.

The two Asoka pillars which now stand at Delhi

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, i. 73, Pl. xxiv; xvi. 104, Pl. xxvii (copied in frontispiece). I am informed that the correct name of the great mound is Nandangaṛh, not Navandgaṛh.

[2] Ibid., xvi. 110, Pl. viii; xxii. 51, Pl. vi, vii.

[3] Ibid., i. 298.

were removed in A.D. 1356 by Fîroz Shâh Tughlak, the one from Topra in the Ambâla (Umballa) District of the Panjâb, and the other from Mîrath (Meerut) in the North-Western Provinces. The process of removal of the Topra monument is described by a contemporary author, and his graphic account is worth transcribing as showing the nature of the difficulties which were successfully and frequently surmounted by Asoka's architects.

'Khizrâbâd,' says the historian, 'is ninety *kos* from Delhi, in the vicinity of the hills. When the Sultan visited that district, and saw the column in the village of Topra, he resolved to remove it to Delhi, and there erect it as a memorial to future generations. After thinking over the best means of lowering the column, orders were issued commanding the attendance of all the people dwelling in the neighbourhood, within and without the Doâb, and all soldiers, both horse and foot. They were ordered to bring all implements and materials suitable for the work. Directions were issued for bringing parcels of the cotton of the silk-cotton tree. Quantities of this silk-cotton were placed round the column, and when the earth at its base was removed, it fell gently over on the bed prepared for it. The cotton was then removed by degrees, and after some days the pillar lay safe upon the ground. When the foundations of the pillar were examined, a large square stone was found as a base, which also was taken out.

The pillar was then encased from top to bottom in reeds and raw skins, so that no damage might accrue to it. A carriage with forty-two wheels was constructed, and ropes were attached to each wheel. Thousands of men hauled at every rope, and after great labour and difficulty the pillar

was raised on to the carriage. A strong rope was fastened to each wheel, and two hundred men pulled at each of these ropes. By the simultaneous exertions of so many thousand men, the carriage was moved and was brought to the banks of the Jumna. Here the Sultan came to meet it. A number of large boats had been collected, some of which could carry 5,000 and 7,000 maunds of grain, and the least of them 2,000 maunds. The column was very ingeniously transferred to these boats, and was then conducted to Fîrozâbâd [old Delhi], where it was landed and conveyed into the Kushk with infinite labour and skill.'

The historian then proceeds to narrate how a special building was prepared for the reception of the monument, which was raised to the summit, where it still stands, with precautions similar to those attending its removal from its original site [1].

The pillar thus removed with so much skill is the most interesting of all the Asoka columns, being the only one on which the invaluable Pillar Edict VII is incised. Fâ-hien, the first Chinese pilgrim, whose travels lasted for fifteen years from A. D. 399, mentions only three Asoka pillars, namely, two at Pâtaliputra, and one at Sankasya.

The later pilgrim, Hiuen Tsiang, who travelled in the seventh century, notices specifically sixteen pillars ascribed to Asoka. Of these, only two have been identified with absolute certainty, the uninscribed column at Bakhira and the inscribed one at Rummindeî. A third, the Niglîva pillar, which does not occupy its

[1] Shams-i-Sirâj, quoted in Carr Stephen's *Archaeology of Delhi*, p. 131.

original position, is probably that seen by Hiuen Tsiang near the *stûpa* of Kanakamuni. The two great pillars, seventy feet high, one surmounted by the figure of an ox and the other by a wheel, which stood at the entrance of the famous Jetavana monastery near Srâvastî, are believed to still exist buried in a Nepalese forest, but their actual discovery remains to reward some fortunate explorer. Fragments of several pillars of the Asoka period have been disclosed by excavations at and near Patna, which probably include the two mentioned by the Chinese pilgrims as existing there.

Nine pillars bearing inscriptions of Asoka are known to exist, none of which are mentioned by the pilgrims, except the monument at Rummindeî, and probably that at Niglîva. It is a very curious fact that the Chinese travellers nowhere make the slightest allusion to the Asoka edicts, whether incised on rocks or pillars. The inscriptions on pillars which they noted were brief dedicatory or commemorative records. The following list of the known inscribed pillars will be found useful for reference:—

INSCRIBED PILLARS OF ASOKA.

Serial No.	Name.	Position.	Remarks.
1	Delhi-Topra	On summit of Kothila in the ruined city Fîrozâbâd near Delhi; removed in A.D. 1356 from Topra in Ambâla District, by Fîroz Shâh Tughlak.	Cited by Cunningham as 'Delhi-Sivâlik,' and by Senart as '*lât* of Fîroz,' or 'D 1.' Pillar Edicts I–VII nearly complete. Capital modern.

Serial No.	Name.	Position.	Remarks.
2	Delhi-Mîrath (Meerut)	On ridge at Delhi, where it was re-erected by English Government in 1867; removed in A.D. 1356 from Meerut by Fîroz Shâh, and erected in the grounds of his hunting-lodge near present position.	Cited by Senart as 'Delhi 2' or 'D[2].' Pillar Edicts I-VI much mutilated. Broken into five pieces, now joined together. Capital missing.
3	Allahabad	Near Ellenborough Barracks in the Fort at Allahabad, but probably removed from Kauśâmbî.	Pillar Edicts I-VI; also Queen's Edict and Kauśâmbî Edict, all imperfect. Capital modern, except abacus.
4	Lauṛiyâ-Ararâj	At the Lauṛiyâ hamlet, a mile from temple of Mahâdeo Ararâj, 20 miles N.W. of Kesariyâ *stûpa*, and on the road to Bettia, in the Champâran District of North Bihâr.	Cited by Senart as 'Radhiah,' or 'R.' Pillar Edicts I-VI practically perfect. Capital lost.
5	Lauṛiyâ-Nandangaṛh (Navandgaṛh)	Near a large village named Lauṛiya, 3 miles N. of Mathia, and 15 miles NNW. of Bettia, in the Champâran District.	Cited by Senart as 'Mathiah,' or 'M.' Pillar Edicts I-VI practically perfect. Capital complete.
6	Râmpurwâ	At Râmpurwâ hamlet, near large village named Pipariâ (E. long. 84° 34′, N. lat. 27° 15′ 45″), in NE. corner of Champâran District.	Imperfectly excavated. Inscription, so far as excavated, in good condition, the same as on Nos. 4 and 5. Capital imperfect.
7	Sânchi	At southern entrance to great *stûpa* of Sânchi in Bhopâl State, Central India.	Fallen and broken, but the capital remains. Inscription much mutilated, being a version of the Kauśâmbî Edict on the Allahabad pillar.

Serial No.	Name.	Position.	Remarks.
8	Niglîva	On west bank of Niglîva (Nigâlî) Sâgar near Niglîva village in Nepalese Tarâi, north of the Bastî District.	In two pieces, and not in original position; capital missing. Imperfect inscription, recording visit of Asoka to *stûpa* of Konâkamana.
9	Rummindeî	At Rummindeî in the Nepalese Tarâi, about 6 miles north from Dulhâ in the Bastî District, and 13 miles nearly SE. from No. 8.	Cited by Bühler as Paderiâ, from name of village to south. Split by lightning and imperfect; the bell portion of the capital remains. Absolutely perfect inscription, recording visit of Asoka to the Lumbini garden.

The rock inscriptions of Asoka are the most peculiar and characteristic monuments of his reign. The longer inscriptions all consist of different recensions of the fourteen Rock Edicts, published in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of the reign, and were recorded at localities situated in the more remote provinces of the empire.

The village of Shâhbâzgarhi is situated on the site of an ancient city, the Po-lu-sha of Hiuen Tsiang, in the Yûsufzâi country, forty miles north-east of Peshâwar, and more than a thousand miles in a direct line distant from Pâtaliputra (Patna), the capital of the Maurya empire. The principal inscription is recorded on both the eastern and western faces of a mass of trap rock, 24 feet long and 10 feet high,

which lies on the slope of the hill south-east of the village. The Toleration Edict, No. XII, discovered by Colonel Deane a few years ago, is incised on a separate rock about fifty yards distant from the main record. The text of all the fourteen edicts is nearly perfect[1].

Another copy of the fourteen edicts (omitting the fourteenth) has been recently discovered at Manserâ in the Hazâra District of the Panjâb, inscribed on two rocks. The text is less complete than that at Shâhbâzgarhi. Both these recensions agree in being inscribed in the form of Aramaic character, written from right to left, and now generally known by the name of Kharoshthî. They also agree in giving special prominence to the Toleration Edict, which has at Manserâ one side of the rock to itself, and at Shâhbâzgarhi is inscribed on a separate rock[2].

The third version of the edicts found on the northern frontier of the empire is at Kâlsî in the Lower Himâlayas, on the road from Sahâranpur to the cantonment of Chakrâta, and about fifteen miles westward from the hill-station of Mussoorie (Mansûri). The record is incised on a block of white quartz about ten feet long and ten feet high, which stands near the foot of the upper of two terraces overlooking the junction of the Tons and Jumna rivers. The text of

[1] Cunningham, *Reports*, v. 9–22, Pl. iii–v; *Epigraphia Indica*, ii. 447; M. Foucher in 11*th Intern. Congress of Orientalists*, Paris, p. 93. This recension is often cited under the name of Kapurdagiri, a neighbouring village.

[2] *Epigraphia Indica*, ii. 447; *Indian Antiquary*, xix. (1890), 43.

the edicts is nearly complete, and agrees closely with the Manserâ recension[1]. The character used, as in all the Asoka inscriptions, except Shâhbâzgarhi and Manserâ, is an ancient form of the Brâhmî character, the parent of the modern Devanâgarî and allied alphabets.

Two copies of the fourteen edicts were published on the western coast. The fragment at Sopârâ, in the Thâna District north of Bombay, consists only of a few words from the eighth edict, but is enough to show that a copy of the edicts once existed at this place, which, under the name of Sûrpâraka, was an important port in ancient times for many centuries[2].

The Girnâr recension, the earliest discovered, is incised on the face of a granite block on the Girnâr hill to the east of the town of Jûnâgarh in the peninsula of Kathiâwâr[3]. M. Senart's translations are based principally on this recension, which has suffered many injuries.

Two copies of the edicts are found near the coast of the Bay of Bengal, within the limits of the kingdom of Kalinga conquered by Asoka in the ninth year of

[1] The name is written Khâlsî by Cunningham and Senart, but Kâlsî seems to be the correct form (Cunningham, *Reports*, i. 244, Pl. xl. 1; *Corpus Inscr. Indicarum*, i. 12; *Epigraphia Indica*, ii. 447).

[2] *Indian Antiquary*, i. 321; iv. 282; vii. 259; and Bhagvân Lâl Indrajî, article 'Sopara' in *Journal Bomb. Br. R. A. S.* for 1882 (reprint).

[3] *Corpus*, p. 14; Senart, *Inscriptions de Piyadasi*, ii. 266, &c.; *Epigraphia Indica*, ii. 447.

his reign. The northern copy is incised on a rock named Aswastama near the summit of a low hill near Dhauli, about four miles a little west of south from Bhuvanesvar in the Katâk District of Orissa. A space measuring fifteen feet by ten on the face of the rock has been prepared to receive the inscription [1].

The southern copy is engraved on the face of a rock situated at an elevation of about 120 feet in a mass of granitic gneiss rising near the centre of an ancient fortified town known as Jaugada in the Ganjâm District of the Madras Presidency, eighteen miles west-north-west from the town of Ganjâm, in 19° 13′ 15″ north latitude, and 84° 53′ 55″ east longitude [2].

The Dhauli and Jaugada recensions are practically duplicates, and agree in omitting Edicts XI, XII, and XIII. They also agree in exhibiting two special edicts, the Borderers' and the Provincials' Edicts, which are not found anywhere else. The texts of the Kalinga recensions are very imperfect [3].

The series of the fourteen Rock Edicts is therefore known to occur, in a form more or less complete, at

[1] *Corpus*, p. 15 (some statements inaccurate); *Reports*, xiii. 95.

[2] *Corpus*, p. 17; *Reports*, xiii. 112; Sewell, *Lists of Antiquities, Madras*, i. 4; Mr. Grahame's Report, dated Feb. 22, 1872, in *Indian Antiquary*, i. 219.

[3] For the Kalinga ('Separate' or 'Detached') Edicts, see *Corpus*, p. 20; *Indian Antiquary*, xix. (1890), 82. All the Asoka inscriptions except the more recent discoveries, namely, the Manserâ version of the fourteen edicts, Edict XII at Shâhbâzgaṛhi, the Tarâi Pillar Edicts, the Râmpurwa Pillar, the Sopârâ fragment, and the Siddâpura inscriptions, are dealt with in M. Senart's book, *Inscriptions de Piyadasi*, published in 1878.

seven places, namely Shâhbâzgarhi, Manserâ, Kâlsî, Sopârâ, Girnâr, Dhauli, and Jaugada. It is possible that other versions may yet be discovered.

The Minor Rock Edicts present a single short edict in variant forms, to which a second still shorter edict, a summary of the Buddhist moral law, is added in the Siddâpura group of copies only. These Minor Edicts are scattered nearly as widely as the fourteen Rock Edicts, being found at Bairât in Râjputâna, Rûpnâth in the Central Provinces, Sahasrâm in Bengal, and Siddâpura in Mysore. Three copies exist at and near Siddâpura [1].

The Bhabra Edict forms a class by itself. It is inscribed on a detached boulder of reddish-grey granite of moderate size, which was discovered in 1837 on the top of a hill near the ancient city of Bairât in Râjputâna, where a copy of the first Minor Rock Edict exists. The boulder is now in the rooms of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta. This edict is peculiar in being addressed to the Buddhist clergy [2].

The Supplementary Pillar Edicts are short documents of comparatively small importance inscribed on the pillars at Allahabad and Sânchi [3].

The two inscribed pillars in the Nepalese Tarâi

[1] Mr. Rice's report, *Edicts of Asoka in Mysore*, Feb., 1892; Bühler, in *Epigraphia Indica*, iii. 134.

[2] Quoted as 'second Bairat rock' in *Corpus*, p. 24; *Indian Antiquary*, xx. (1891), 154.

[3] Bühler's editions of the 'Queen's' and 'Kauśâmbî' Edicts are in *Indian Antiquary*, xix. (1890), 123. He edited the Sânchi fragment in *Epigraphia Indica*, ii. 87, 366. The Sânchi pillar is described in *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 193.

record the visits paid by Asoka to two Buddhist holy places of great sanctity, and the brief inscriptions in the Barâbar caves near Gayâ record the presentation to the Ajîvika ascetics of rock-hewn cave dwellings. These dwellings are hewn out of solid granite, and the walls have been polished with infinite pains[1].

The known Asoka inscriptions may be conveniently arranged, approximately in chronological order, in eight classes :—

I. The Fourteen Rock Edicts, in seven recensions as already enumerated;

II. The two Kalinga Edicts at Dhauli and Jaugada;

III. The Minor Rock Edicts, in four recensions, as above enumerated, of the first edict, and in three copies of the second edict;

IV. The Bhabra Edict;

V. The three Cave Inscriptions;

VI. The two Tarâi Pillar Inscriptions, at Niglîva and Rummindeî;

VII. The Seven Pillar Edicts; in six recensions, as above enumerated; and

VIII. The Supplementary Pillar Edicts, namely, the Queen's Edict and the Kausâmbî Edict on the Allahabad pillar, and a variant of the Kausâmbî Edict on the Sânchi pillar.

The number of distinct documents may be reckoned as thirty-four (I, 14; II, 2; III, 2; IV, 1; V, 3; VI, 2; VII, 7; VIII, 3).

[1] Cunningham, *Corpus*, p. 30; *Reports*, i. 45. Bühler has edited the inscriptions in *Indian Antiquary*, xx. (1891), 361.

The inscriptions are all written in forms of Prâkrit, that is to say, vernacular dialects nearly allied to literary Sanskrit. But the dialects of the inscriptions are to a considerable extent peculiar, and are not identical either with Pâlî or any of the literary Prâkrits. Most of the inscriptions are written in the dialect known as Mâgadhî, then current at the capital of the empire, where the text was evidently prepared. The versions published at the distant stations of Girnâr and Shâhbâzgarhi were prepared in the viceregal offices, and exhibit many local peculiarities. The texts in the Central Provinces and Mysore are intermediate in character between those of Girnâr and those of the east.

The minute study of the Asoka inscriptions by many scholars, among whom M. Émile Senart and the late Dr. Bühler occupy the place of honour, has greatly contributed to the elucidation of numerous problems in the history of Indian civilization, but a full discussion of the results obtained would be too technical for these pages.

The arts in the age of Asoka had undoubtedly attained to a high standard of excellence.

The royal architects were capable of designing and erecting spacious and lofty edifices in brick, wood, and stone, of handling with success enormous monoliths, of constructing massive embankments with convenient sluice-gates, and of excavating commodious chambers in the most refractory rock. Sculpture was the handmaid of architecture, and all notable buildings were

freely and richly adorned with decorative patterns, an infinite variety of bas-reliefs, and numerous statues of men and animals. The art of painting was no doubt practised, as we know it was practised with success in a later age, but no specimen that can be referred to the Maurya period has escaped the tooth of time.

The skill of the stone-cutter may be said to have attained perfection. Gigantic shafts of hard sandstone, thirty or forty feet in length, and enormous surfaces of granite, were polished like jewels, and the joints of masonry were fitted with the utmost nicety. White ants and other destructive agencies have prevented the preservation of any specimens of woodwork, save a few posts and beams buried in the silt of the rivers at Patna, but the character of the carpenter's art of the period is known from the architectural decoration, which, as Fergusson so persistently pointed out, is derived from wooden prototypes. The beads and other jewellery and the seals of the Maurya period and earlier ages, which have been frequently found, prove that the Indian lapidaries and goldsmiths of the earliest historical period were not inferior to those of any other country. The recorded descriptions and sculptured representations of chariots, harness, arms, accoutrements, dress, textile fabrics, and other articles of necessity and luxury indicate that the Indian empire had then attained a stage of material civilization probably equal to that attained under the famous Mughal emperors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Greek writers speak with the utmost respect of

the power and resources of the kingdoms of the Prasii and Gangaridae, that is to say, Magadha or Bihâr, and Bengal.

Writing was in common use. The Brâhmî alphabet, the parent of the modern Devanâgarî and most of the other alphabets now used in India, a descendant from remote Phoenician ancestry, exhibits in the inscriptions so many varieties that it must have been already in use for several centuries. The Sânchi relic caskets prove that the use of ink for writing was familiar. The care taken to publish the emperor's sermons by inscribing them on rocks, boulders, and pillars along the main lines of communication implies the existence of a considerable public able to read the documents [1].

Asoka's selection of seven 'passages' from the Buddhist scriptures, as his specially cherished texts, implies the existence at the time of a large body of collected doctrine, which must have been preserved in a written form. The vast mass of prose books included in the Buddhist canon could not have been preserved for centuries by memory only.

The history of the origin and development of all this advanced civilization is very imperfectly known. With very small exceptions, consisting of a few coin legends, the short dedicatory inscription on the relic

[1] See Bühler's admirable dissertations in his *Indische Palaeographie* (*Grundriss*, 1896), and his papers on the origin of the Brâhmî and Kharoshthî alphabets, reprinted from Band cxxxii of the *Sitzungsberichte der kais. Akad. der Wiss. in Wien*, 1895; and Hoernle, 'An Epigraphical Note on Palm-leaf, Paper, and Birch-bark,' in *J. A. S. B.*, Part i, lxix. (1900), 130.

casket in the Piprâvâ *stûpa*, and possibly two or three other very brief records, the Asoka inscriptions are the earliest known Indian documents. The historical links connecting the alphabet of these documents with its Semitic prototype are, therefore, wanting. But Bühler was probably right in deriving the Brâhmî alphabets of Asoka from Mesopotamia, and in dating the introduction of the earliest form of those alphabets into India in about B.C. 800. Dr. Hoernle brings the date a century or two lower down.

The Kharoshthî alphabet, written from right to left, in which the Shâhbâzgarhi and Manserâ recensions of the edicts are recorded, is undoubtedly a form of the Aramaic or Syrian character introduced into the regions on the north-western frontier of India after the conquest of the Panjâb by Darius, the son of Hystaspes, about B.C. 500. The Persian sovereignty in those regions probably lasted up to the invasion of Alexander.

The imposing fabric of the Achaemenian empire of Persia evidently impressed the Indian mind, and several circumstances indicate a Persian influence on Indian civilization. The frontier recensions of the edicts are not only written in the character used by the Persian clerks, they also use a pure Persian word to express 'writing,' and each edict opens with a formula 'Thus saith King Priyadarsin,' which recalls the stately language of the Achaemenian monarchs.

The pillars, both the detached monumental monoliths and the structural columns, of Asoka's architec-

ture are obviously Persian. The characteristic features, the stepped base, the bell capital, and the combined animals of the upper capital, are distinctly Achaemenian. The bas-reliefs give innumerable examples of such pillars, in addition to the considerable number of existing structural specimens. The winged lions, and several other details of architectural decoration, are expressions of Assyrian influence. The acanthus leaves, astragalus and bead moulding, and honeysuckle decoration of some of Asoka's capitals are probably to be explained as borrowed from Greek, or Hellenistic, originals [1].

In the Buddhist Jâtaka stories, which depict the life of India in the fifth and sixth centuries B. C., architecture is all wooden. In Asoka's age the material of architecture is generally either brick or stone, imitating wooden prototypes. This change is probably in the main to be ascribed to Asoka. Hiuen Tsiang records the tradition that he built a masonry wall round the capital, replacing the old wooden palisade which contented the founder of the Maurya empire [2]. Although this is the only recorded instance of the substitution of brick or stone for timber, it is probably a symbol of a general transformation, for no certain example of any masonry building older than Asoka's time, except a few very plain *stûpas*, is known to exist. The *stûpa*,

[1] See Cunningham, *Reports*, i. 243, iii. 97, 100; v. 189; V. A. Smith, 'Graeco-Roman Influence on the Civilization of Ancient India,' in *Journal As. Soc. Bengal*, Part i. (1889); and Perrot and Chipiez, *History of Art in Persia*, pp. 86 to 120.

[2] Beal, ii. 85.

or sacred cupola, itself is, of course, an exception to the statement that Maurya architecture followed wooden forms, the *stûpa* being obviously a development of the earthen tumulus. The ornamental railings which surrounded the principal *stûpas*, and the *toran* gateways of those railings, are in every feature and every detail copies of woodwork.

The imitation of woodwork in these structures is so obvious, and the forms are clearly so much more suitable for wood than stone, that even the finest examples excite, along with admiration, a feeling of disapproval based on the incongruity between the design and the material. The façades of buildings represented in the bas-reliefs suggest timber models with equal distinctness, and wood, of course, must have been actually used to a large extent for balconies and other features of the front elevations of buildings, as it is to this day.

The artistic merit of the sculptures, although not comparable with the masterpieces of Greek genius, is far from being contemptible. The few surviving specimens of statues of the human figure in the round are either so mutilated, or the descriptions and plates representing them are so imperfect, that it is difficult and hazardous to pronounce an opinion on their merits as works of art. The lions of the Bakhira and Lauriyâ-Nandangarh pillars, though somewhat stiff and formal, are creditable performances, and the paws are executed with regard to the facts of nature. The elephants, as usual in Indian sculp-

ture, are the best of the animals. The fore-half of an elephant is carved in the round from the rock over the Dhauli copy of the edicts, and seems to be well executed. It occupies that position as an emblem of Gautama Buddha, and is replaced at Kâlsî by a drawing of an elephant incised on the stone.

The sculptures in bas-relief, if they cannot often be described as beautiful, are full of life and vigour, and frankly realistic. No attempt is made to idealize the objects depicted, although the artists have allowed their fancy considerable play in the representations of tritons and other fabulous creatures. The pictorial scenes, even without the help of perspective, tell their stories with vividness, and many of the figures are designed with much spirit. As in almost all Indian sculpture, the treatment of the muscles is conventional and inadequate.

Images of the Buddha were not known in the age of Asoka, and are consequently absent from his sculptures. The Teacher is represented by symbols only, the empty seat, the pair of foot-prints, the wheel.

The decorative ornaments of the Asoka sculptures much resemble those found on many Buddhist and Jain structures for several centuries subsequent. They exhibit great variety of design, and some of the fruit and flower patterns are extremely elegant.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROCK INSCRIPTIONS

1. The Fourteen Rock Edicts

(Thirteenth and Fourteenth Years)

EDICT I

THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE[1]

THIS pious edict has been written by command of His Sacred Majesty King Priyadarsin[2]:—

Here [? in the capital][3] no animal may be slaugh-

[1] The headings to the edicts, of course, do not exist in the original. They have been devised and inserted to facilitate the understanding of the documents, and to bring out clearly the fact, which is liable to be obscured by the repetition of phrases, that each edict is appropriated to a special subject.

[2] The title *devânâm priya* (Pâlî, *devânaṁ piya*) is literally translated 'beloved of the gods,' or *devas*. But such a literal translation is misleading. The title was the official style of kings in the third century B.C., and was used by Dasaratha, grandson of Asoka, and Tishya (Tissa), King of Ceylon, as well as by Asoka. The phrase 'His Sacred Majesty,' or, more briefly, 'His Majesty,' seems to be an adequate equivalent. In the Shâhbâzgaṛhi, Kâlsî, and Manserâ versions of Rock Edict VIII, the title in the plural, 'Their Majesties,' is used as the equivalent of *râjâno*, 'kings,' in the Girnâr text. See p. 124, note 1.

The Shâhbâzgaṛhi and Manserâ recensions use the Sanskrit form Priyadarśin; the other recensions use the Pâlî form Piyadasi. In this work the Sanskrit forms of proper names have generally been preferred.

[3] The word 'here' probably refers to the capital, Pâṭaliputra, or, possibly, to the palace only. So, in the Shâhbâzgaṛhi,

tered for sacrifice, nor may holiday-feasts be held, for His Majesty King Priyadarsin sees manifold evil in holiday-feasts. Nevertheless, certain holiday-feasts are meritorious in the sight of His Majesty King Priyadarsin [1].

Formerly, in the kitchen of His Majesty King Priyadarsin, each day many thousands of living creatures were slain to make curries.

At the present moment, when this pious edict is being written, only these three living creatures, namely two peacocks and one deer, are killed daily, and the deer not invariably.

Even these three creatures shall not be slaughtered in future.

EDICT II

PROVISION OF COMFORTS FOR MEN AND ANIMALS

Everywhere in the dominions of His Majesty King Priyadarsin [2], and likewise in neighbouring realms, such as those of the Chola, Pândya, Satiyaputra, and Keralaputra, in Ceylon, in the dominions of the Greek King Antiochus, and in those of the other kings subordinate to that Antiochus—everywhere [3], on behalf of

Kâlsî, and Manserâ recensions of Rock Edict V, the phrase 'here and in all the provincial towns' corresponds to 'at Pâṭaliputra,' &c. of the Girnâr recension. In the present passage M. Senart's rendering is 'ici-bas.' See p. 120, note 4.

[1] 'Holiday-feast' seems to be the best rendering for *samâja*. Such feasts were usually attended with destruction of animal life. If such destruction were avoided, even holiday-feasts might be considered meritorious (*sâdhumatâ*, Girnâr), or excellent (*srestamati*, Shâhb.). See Rhys Davids, 'Dialogues,' p. 7.

[2] Shâhbâzgaṛhi omits the word 'king.'

[3] The Chola kingdom had its capital at Uṛaiyûr, near Trichinopoly. Madura was the capital of the Pâṇḍya kingdom. Kerala is the Malabar coast. The position of the Satiya-

His Majesty King Priyadarsin, have two kinds of remedies [? hospitals] been disseminated—remedies for men, and remedies for beasts[1]. Healing herbs, medicinal for man and medicinal for beast, wherever they were lacking, have everywhere been imported and planted.

In like manner, roots and fruits, wherever they were lacking, have been imported and planted.

On the roads, trees have been planted, and wells have been dug for the use of man and beast[2].

EDICT III

THE QUINQUENNIAL ASSEMBLY

Thus saith His Majesty King Priyadarsin:—

In the thirteenth year of my reign[3] I issued this command:—

Everywhere in my dominions the lieges, and the Commissioners, and the District Officers[4] must every

putra is not known. Antiochus=Antiochus Theos (B.C. 261–246). The kings subordinate to Antiochus cannot be identified.

[1] M. Senart translates *chikisakâ* (*chikîchha*, Skr. *chikitsa*) as 'remèdes'; Bühler follows the older versions, and renders 'hospitals.' I am disposed to agree with M. Senart.

[2] The passage beginning at 'Healing' is given in a briefer form in the Shâhbâzgaṛhi version. The text follows the fuller recensions.

[3] Literally, 'by me anointed twelve years.' The regnal years are always reckoned from the time of the solemn consecration or anointing (*abhisheka*), which may be conveniently rendered 'coronation.'

[4] In rendering *yutâ* (*yuta*) as an adjective meaning 'loyal' and qualifying *rajuko* (Shâhb.), Bühler has overlooked the three words *cha* ('and') in the Girnâr text (*yutâ cha râjûke cha prâdesike cha*), which necessitate the interpretation of *yutâ* as a substantive.

The *rajjûkas* (*râjûke*) were high revenue and executive officers,

five years repair to the General Assembly, for the special purpose, in addition to other business, of proclaiming the Law of Piety, to wit, 'Obedience to father and mother is good; liberality to friends, acquaintances, relatives, Brahmans, and ascetics is good; respect for the sacredness of life is good; avoidance of extravagance and violence of language is good.'

The clergy will thus instruct the lieges in detail, both according to the letter and the spirit[1].

EDICT IV

THE PRACTICE OF PIETY

For a long time past, even for many hundred years, the slaughter of living creatures, cruelty to animate beings, disrespect to relatives, and disrespect to Brahmans and ascetics, have grown.

But now, by reason of the practice of piety by His Majesty King Priyadarsin, instead of the sound of the war-drum, the sound of the drum of piety is heard, while heavenly spectacles of processional cars, elephants, illuminations, and the like, are displayed to the people[2].

superior in rank to the *prâdesikas*. I have translated the two words by familiar Anglo-Indian terms. Prof. Kern translates the term *anu·saṁyâna* as 'tour of inspection,' instead of 'assembly.'

[1] *Parisâ* = clergy (*saṁgha*), according to M. Senart, whom I follow. Bühler paraphrases 'the teachers, and ascetics of all schools,' and continues 'will inculcate what is befitting at divine service.' I follow M. Senart in translating *yute* (*yutani*) as 'the lieges' (fidèles), and *gaṇanâyaṁ* (*gaṇanasi*) as 'in detail.'

[2] Literally (Senart, i. 100), 'But now, by reason of the practice of piety by His Majesty, the sound of the war-drum, or rather the sound of the law of piety, [is heard] bringing with it the display of heavenly spectacles,' &c. The progress of the Buddhist teaching is compared to the reverberation of a drum, and is accompanied by magnificent religious processions and

As for many hundred years past has not happened, at this present, by reason of His Majesty King Priyadarsin's proclamation of the law of piety, the cessation of slaughter of living creatures, the prevention of cruelty to animate beings, respect to relatives, respect to Brahmans and ascetics, obedience to parents and obedience to elders, are growing.

Thus, and in many other ways, the practice of piety is growing, and His Majesty King Priyadarsin will cause that practice to grow still more.

ceremonies, which are described as heavenly spectacles, taking the place of military pageants. Fâ-hien's description of a grand Buddhist procession at Pâṭaliputra, although centuries later in date, is the best commentary on this passage, and is therefore quoted in full :—

'Every year on the eighth month they celebrate a procession of images. They make a four-wheeled car, and on it erect a structure of five storeys by means of bamboos tied together. This is supported by a king-post, with poles and lances slanting from it, and is rather more than twenty cubits high, having the shape of a tope. White and silk-like cloth of hair (? Cashmere) is wrapped all round it, which is then painted in various colours.

They make figures of *devas*, with gold, silver, and lapis lazuli grandly blended, and having silken streamers and canopies hung out over them. On the four sides are niches with a Buddha seated in each, and a Bodhisattva standing in attendance on him.

There may be twenty cars, all grand and imposing, but each one different from the others. On the day mentioned, the monks and laity within the borders all come together; they have singers and skilful musicians; they pay their devotions with flowers and incense. The Brahmans come and invite the Buddhas to enter the city. These do so in order, and remain two nights in it. All through the night they keep lamps burning, have skilful music, and present offerings.

This is the practice in all the other kingdoms as well.' (Ch. xxvii, Legge's translation.)

The sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons of His Majesty King Priyadarsin will promote the growth of that practice until the end of the cycle, and, abiding in piety and morality, will proclaim the law of piety; for the best of all deeds is the proclamation of the law of piety, and the practice of piety is not for the immoral man [1].

In this matter growth is good, and not to decrease is good.

For this very purpose has this writing been made, in order that men may in this matter strive for growth, and not suffer decrease.

This has been written by command of His Majesty King Priyadarsin in the thirteenth year of his reign.

EDICT V

CENSORS OF THE LAW OF PIETY

Thus saith His Majesty King Priyadarsin:—

A good deed is a difficult thing.

The author of a good deed does a difficult thing. Now by me many good deeds have been done. Should my sons, grandsons, and my descendants after them until the end of the cycle follow in this path, they will do well; but in this matter, should a man neglect the commandment [2], he will do ill, inasmuch as sin is easily committed.

Now in all the long ages past, officers known as Censors of the Law of Piety had never been appointed, whereas in the fourteenth year of my reign Censors of the Law of Piety were appointed by me.

They are engaged among people of all sects [3] in

[1] *Sîla* = morality, or virtue; *asîla* = immoral.

[2] *Desaṁ* = *sandesaṁ*, 'commandment.' Bühler renders 'he who will give up even a portion of these virtuous acts, will commit sin.' I have followed M. Senart. See p. 123, note 2.

[3] *Savapâsaṇḍesu*. Considering how closely related were all

promoting the establishment of piety, the progress of piety, and the welfare and happiness of the lieges [1], as well as of the Yonas, Kambojas, Gandhâras, Râshtrikas, Pitenikas, and other nations on my borders [2].

They are engaged in promoting the welfare and happiness of my hired servants [? soldiers], of Brahmans, of rich and poor [3], and of the aged, and in removing hindrances from the path of the faithful lieges.

They are engaged in the prevention of wrongful imprisonment or chastisement, in the work of removing hindrances and of deliverance, considering cases where a man has a large family, has been smitten by calamity, or is advanced in years.

Here, at Pâtaliputra [4], and in all the provincial

the forms of 'religion' current in Asoka's empire, I prefer to render by 'sects' rather than 'creeds.'

[1] *Dhaṁmayutasa*, as a collective, 'the lieges,' or 'the faithful.' The Rock Edicts being addressed to the population in general, there is difficulty in restricting the term to the Buddhists only, as M. Senart does. Bühler translates 'loyal subjects.'

[2] Yonas (Yavanas), some of the semi-independent foreign tribes on the north-western frontier; Gandhâras, the people of the Yûsufzâi country; Kambojas, also a north-western tribe; Râshṭṛikas, uncertain; Pitenikas, uncertain.

[3] Senart and Bühler differ widely in their interpretation of this passage. 'Among my hired servants, among Brahmans and Vaiśyas, among the unprotected and among the aged, they are busy with the welfare and happiness, with the removal of obstacles among my loyal ones' (Bühler).

'Ils s'occupent . . . des guerriers, des brâhmanes et des riches, des pauvres, des vieillards, en vue de leur utilité et de leur bonheur, pour lever tous les obstacles devant les fidèles de la [vraie] religion' (Senart).

[4] The gloss 'at Pâṭaliputra' is found in the Girnâr text only, and was evidently inserted locally to make the word 'here' intelligible. See p. 114, note 3.

towns, they are engaged in the superintendence of all the female establishments[1] of my brothers and sisters and other relatives.

Everywhere in my dominions these Censors of the Law of Piety are engaged with those among my lieges who are devoted to piety, established in piety[2], or addicted to almsgiving.

For this purpose has this pious edict been written—that it may endure for long, and that my subjects may act accordingly[3].

EDICT VI

THE PROMPT DISPATCH OF BUSINESS

Thus saith his Majesty King Priyadarsin :—

For a long time past business has not been disposed of, nor have reports been received at all hours[4].

[1] Members of the royal family were stationed as viceroys or governors at at least four provincial towns, Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali, and Suvarnagiri. I abstain from translating *olodhanesu* by 'harem' (Bühler), or 'zenana,' because those terms connote the seclusion of women, which was not the custom of ancient India. M. Senart translates the word by 'l'intérieur.'

[2] The phrase *dhramadhitane*, 'established in piety,' is omitted from the Kâlsî text. For *dhaṁmayutasi*, see page 120, note 1; in this passage it seems to be an adjective qualifying *vijitasi*, 'dominions.'

[3] M. Senart translates:—'C'est dans ce but que cet édit a été gravé. Puisse-t-il durer longtemps, et puissent les créatures suivre ainsi mes exemples.' *Pajâ* (*praja*) is better translated 'subjects' than 'créatures.' It still has the meaning of 'subjects' in Hindî.

[4] The institution of official reporters (*paṭivedakâs*) existed in the time of Chandragupta. 'The overseers, to whom is assigned the duty of watching all that goes on, and making reports secretly to the king. Some are entrusted with the inspection of the city, and others with that of the army. The

I have accordingly arranged that at all hours and in all places—whether I am dining or in the ladies' apartments, in my bedroom, or in my closet, in my carriage, or in the palace gardens[1]—the official reporters should keep me constantly informed of the people's business, which business of the people I am ready to dispose of at any place[2].

And if, perchance, I personally by word of mouth command that a gift be made or an order executed, or anything urgent is entrusted to the officials[3], and in that business a dispute arises or fraud occurs among the clergy[4], I have commanded that immediate report

former employ as their coadjutors the courtezans of the city, and the latter the courtezans of the camp. The ablest and most trustworthy men are appointed to fill these offices' (Megasthenes, quoted by Strabo, xv. 1. 48; in McCrindle, *Ancient India*, p. 85).

[1] The exact meaning of some of these words is uncertain. *Gabhâgâra*, which I translate 'bedroom,' following M. Senart, is translated 'sanctuary' by Prof. Kern. *Vracha*, 'closet,' seems to mean 'latrine.' *Vinîtamhi* = 'carriages' (Bühler); = ? 'retraite religieuse,' or 'oratory' (Senart). I have adopted Bühler's translation.

[2] Compare Megasthenes' account of Chandragupta:—'The king leaves his palace not only in time of war, but also for the purpose of judging causes. He then remains in court for the whole day, without allowing the business to be interrupted, even though the hour arrives when he must needs attend to his person, that is, when he is to be rubbed by cylinders of wood. He continues hearing cases while the friction, which is performed by four attendants, is still proceeding' (Strabo, xv. 1. 56, in *Ancient India*, p. 72).

[3] 'Officials,' *mahâmâtesu*. In some passages I have translated this word as 'magistrates.'

[4] 'Clergy,' *parisâ*. M. Senart considers this word to be a synonym of *saṁgha*, and translates 'l'assemblée du clergé.' Bühler translates 'committee [of any caste or sect].'

must be made to me at any hour and at any place, for I am never fully satisfied with my exertions and my dispatch of business.

Work I must for the public benefit—and the root of the matter is in exertion and dispatch of business, than which nothing is more efficacious for the general welfare. And for what do I toil? For no other end than this, that I may discharge my debt to animate beings, and that while I make some happy in this world, they may in the next world gain heaven.

For this purpose have I caused this pious edict to be written, that it may long endure, and that my sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons may strive for the public weal; though that is a difficult thing to attain, save by the utmost toil[1].

EDICT VII

IMPERFECT FULFILMENT OF THE LAW

His Majesty King Priyadarsin desires that in all places men of all sects may abide, for they all desire mastery over the senses and purity of mind.

Man, however, is unstable in his wishes, and unstable in his likings.

Some of the sects will perform the whole, others will perform but a part of the commandment. Even for a person to whom lavish liberality is impossible, the virtues of mastery over the senses, purity of mind, gratitude, and fidelity are always meritorious[2].

[1] The text of the concluding paragraph varies slightly in the different recensions. The Kâlsî text adds the words 'my wives.' M. Senart translates 'puisse-t-il subsister longtemps! et que mes fils,' &c.

[2] I have followed M. Senart in his amended rendering of *ekadeśaṁ* (*Ind. Ant.* xix. 87), see p. 119, note 2; and in his interpretation of *nichâ* (*niche*) as = *nityam*, 'always': Bühler takes the word as = *nîcha*, and translates 'in a lowly man.'

EDICT VIII

PIOUS TOURS

In times past Their Majesties ['Kings,' *Girnâr*][1] used to go out on so-called[2] tours of pleasure, during which hunting and other similar amusements used to be practised.

His Majesty King Priyadarsin, however, in the eleventh year of his reign went out on the road leading to true knowledge[3], whence originated here[4] tours devoted to piety, during which are practised the beholding of ascetics and Brahmans, with liberality to them, the beholding of elders, largess of gold, the beholding of the country and the people, proclamation of the law of piety, and discussion of the law of piety[5].

[1] *Devânaṁ priya* (Shâhb.), *devana priya* (M.), and *devânaṁ piya* (Kâlsî), all plural forms, meaning 'Their Majesties,' equivalent to *râjâno*,' kings,' of Girnâr text. The words are *Atikâtanṭaṁtaraṁ râjâno vihârayatâṁ ñayâsu* (G.); and *Atikaṁtaṁ aṁtalaṁ devânaṁpiyâ vihâlayâtaṁ nâma nikhamisu* (K.). M. Senart (i. 192) was provided with faulty texts. See p. 114, note 2.

[2] The word *nâma* (*nama*), 'so-called,' is omitted in the Girnâr text.

[3] M. Senart's commentary (i. 186) requires modification. The true sense is explained by Prof. Rhys Davids in *Dialogues of the Buddha*, p. 191. The 'road' on which the emperor set out is 'the eight-fold path' leading to the state of an Arhat. The steps in the 'eight-fold path' are (1) right views, (2) right feelings, (3) right words, (4) right behaviour, (5) right mode of livelihood, (6) right exertion, (7) right memory, (8) right meditation and tranquillity (Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 108).

[4] 'Here' may mean 'at Pâṭaliputra' (see p. 114, note 3; p. 120, note 4), or 'in the empire.'

[5] *Dasane* (*draśane*) means the respectful visit to and viewing of an object deserving of veneration, such as a living saint or the image of a god. The word (*darsan*) is in common use to

Consequently, since that time, these are the pleasures of His Majesty King Priyadarsin, in exchange for those of the past.

EDICT IX[1]

TRUE CEREMONIAL

Thus saith His Majesty King Priyadarsin:—People perform various ceremonies[2] on occasions of sickness, the weddings of sons, the weddings of daughters[3], the birth of children, and departure on journeys. On these and other similar occasions people perform many ceremonies.

But at such times the womankind[4] perform many,

this day. The *dharma*, or law of piety, requires reverence to be shown to Brahmans, ascetics, and elders; and Asoka, therefore, considers the reverential beholding of such persons to be an act of merit. In his capacity of sovereign and father of his people he likewise claims credit for beholding, or inspecting, the country and people. The Girnâr text alone inserts the word 'and' between 'the country' and 'the people.'

[1] Translated from the Shâhbâzgaṛhi text, in general accordance with Bühler's interpretation. The recensions of this edict differ more widely than usual.

[2] 'Ceremonies,' or 'ceremonial,' *maṁgalaṁ*. '*Maṁgalaṁ* embrasse deux nuances de signification dont on a tour à tour exagéré l'importance particulière, et qu'il n'est pas aisé de mettre suffisamment au relief dans une traduction concise:—l'idée de fête, de réjouissance (cp. l'usage pâlî), et l'idée de pratiques religieuses qui doivent porter bonheur à qui les accomplit' (Senart, i. 203). In the Jâtakas, as M. Senart informs me, the word is specially applied to the worship of the Hindoo deities.

[3] *Âvâha, vivâha.* Cf. Latin *ducere* and *nubere*.

[4] 'Womankind,' *striyaka*; *mahiḍâyo* (Girnâr), ? = Skr. *mahilâ*; *balika janika* (Manserâ), = Skr. *bâlaka*; *abakajaniyo* (Kâlsî).

manifold, corrupt, and worthless ceremonies. Ceremonies certainly have to be performed, although that sort is fruitless. This sort, however—the ceremonial of piety—bears great fruit; it includes kind treatment of slaves and servants, honour to teachers, respect for life, liberality to ascetics and Brahmans. These things, and others of the same kind, are called the ceremonial of piety.

Therefore ought a father, son, brother, master, friend, or comrade, nay even a neighbour, to say: 'This is meritorious, this is the ceremonial to be performed until the attainment of the desired end.' By what sort of ceremonies is the desired end attained? for the ceremonial of this world is of doubtful efficacy; perchance it may accomplish the desired end, perchance its effect may be merely of this world. The ceremonial of piety, on the contrary, is not temporal; if it fails to attain the desired end in this world, it certainly begets endless merit in the other world. If it happens to attain the desired end, then a gain of two kinds is assured, namely, in this world the desired end, and in the other world the begetting of endless merit through the aforesaid ceremonial of piety[1].

EDICT X

TRUE GLORY

His Majesty King Priyadarsin does not believe that glory and renown bring much profit unless the people both in the present and the future obediently hearken to the Law of Piety, and conform to its precepts.

[1] 'En effet, ce qui distingue la pratique de la religion des pratiques du rituel, suivant Piyadasi, c'est que la première produit infailliblement des fruits qui s'étendent à l'autre monde, tandis que les autres peuvent tout au plus avoir des effets limités au temps présent et à la circonstance particulière qui en a été l'occasion' (Senart, i. 217).

For that purpose only does His Majesty King Priyadarsin desire glory and renown.

But whatsoever exertions His Majesty King Priyadarsin has made, all are for the sake of the life hereafter, so that every one may be freed from peril, which peril is sin.

Difficult, verily, it is to attain such freedom, whether people[1] be of low or of high degree, save by the utmost exertion and complete renunciation; but this is for those of high degree extraordinarily difficult[2].

EDICT XI

TRUE CHARITY

There is no such charity as the charitable gift of the Law of Piety, no such friendship as the friendship in piety, no such distribution as the distribution of piety, no such kinship as kinship in piety.

The Law of Piety consists in these things, to wit, kind treatment of slaves and servants, obedience to father and mother, charity to ascetics and Brahmans, respect for the sanctity of life.

Therefore a father, son, brother, master, friend, or comrade, nay even a neighbour, ought to say: 'This is meritorious, this ought to be done.'

He who acts thus both gains this world and begets infinite merit in the next world, by means of this very charity of the Law of Piety[3].

[1] 'People,' *janena* (Girnâr); *vagrena* (Shâhb. and Manserâ); *vagena* (Kâlsî). *Varga* = 'class of people.' The reading is quite certain.

[2] Cf. Matthew xix. 23: 'It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.' For the exhortation to exertion, cf. the sermon of Nigrodha from *Dhammapada*, v. 21, in *Dîpavaṁsa*, vi. 23: 'Earnestness (*appamâdo*) is the way to immortality, indifference is the way to death; the earnest do not die, the indifferent are like the dead' (Oldenberg's translation).

[3] The translation is from the Shâhbâzgaṛhi text. The other

EDICT XII

TOLERATION

His Majesty King Priyadarsin does reverence to men of all sects, whether ascetics or householders, by donations and various modes of reverence.

His Majesty, however, cares not so much for donations or external reverence as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects. The growth of the essence of the matter assumes various forms, but the root of it is restraint of speech, to wit, a man must not do reverence to his own sect by disparaging that of another man for trivial reasons. Depreciation should be for adequate reasons only, because the sects of other people deserve reverence for one reason or another.

By thus acting, a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people. By acting contrariwise, a man hurts his own sect, and does disservice to the sects of other people. For he who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging all other sects from a feeling of attachment to his own, on the supposition that he thus glorifies his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts severe injury on his own sect.

Self-control[1], therefore, is meritorious, to wit, hearkening to the law of others, and hearkening willingly.

texts differ slightly in phraseology. The ninth edict above may be compared. The general sense is that every man is bound to communicate the Law of Piety to his neighbour, and that such communication is better than any material almsgiving. In that Law men are bound by stronger ties than those of natural kindred. Compare the expression *dâyâdo sâsane*, 'a relation of the Faith,' in *Dîpavamsa*, vii. 16, 17, &c. Bühler and M. Senart, have rightly understood this edict, while Prof. Kern (*Ind. Ant.* v. 270) has erred.

[1] 'Self-control,' *sayamo* (Shâhb.). Girnâr text has *samavâyo*, 'concord.'

For this is His Majesty's desire, that adherents of all sects should be fully instructed and sound in doctrine.

The adherents of the several sects must be informed that His Majesty cares not so much for donations or external reverence as that there should be a growth, and a large growth, of the essence of the matter in all sects.

For this very purpose are employed the Censors of the Law of Piety, the Censors of the Women, the (?) Inspectors[1], and other official bodies[2]. And this is the fruit thereof—the growth of one's own sect, and the glorification of the Law of Piety.

EDICT XIII

TRUE CONQUEST[3]

His Majesty King Priyadarsin in the ninth year of his reign conquered the Kalingas[4].

[1] The Censors of Women are alluded to in Pillar Edict VII. *Vachabhûmikâ*, conjecturally rendered 'Inspectors,' is of uncertain meaning.

[2] 'Official bodies,' *nikâyâ* (*nikaye*). Cf. the Boards described by Megasthenes.

[3] When M. Senart's book was published, the interpretation of this celebrated edict, 'pour laquelle presque tout reste à faire,' depended chiefly on an imperfect transcript of the Kâlsî text. The publication of a practically complete facsimile of the Shâhbâzgaṛhi text has rendered possible a translation in which very little doubt remains.

[4] 'The Kalingas,' *Kaliṁgani*; the country extending along the coast of the Bay of Bengal from the Mahânadî river on the north to or beyond the Kṛishṇa river on the south; often called 'the Three Kalingas,' which are supposed to be the kingdoms of Amarâvatî, Andhra or Warangal, and Kalinga proper or Râjamahendri. In this edict the name is used in both the singular and the plural. The Dhauli and Jaugaḍa rock inscriptions are situated in this conquered province.

One hundred and fifty thousand persons were thence carried away captive, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times that number perished.

Ever since the annexation[1] of the Kalingas, His Majesty has zealously protected the Law of Piety, has been devoted to that law, and has proclaimed its precepts.

His Majesty feels remorse on account of the conquest of the Kalingas, because, during the subjugation of a previously unconquered country, slaughter, death, and taking away captive of the people necessarily occur, whereat His Majesty feels profound sorrow and regret.

There is, however, another reason for His Majesty feeling still more regret, inasmuch as in such a country dwell Brahmans and ascetics, men of different sects, and householders, who all practise obedience to elders, obedience to father and mother, obedience to teachers, proper treatment of friends, acquaintances, comrades, relatives, slaves and servants, with fidelity of devotion[2]. To such people dwelling in that country happen violence, slaughter, and separation from those whom they love.

Even those persons who are themselves protected retain their affections undiminished:—ruin falls on their friends, acquaintances, comrades, and relatives, and in this way violence is done to those who are personally unhurt[3]. All this diffused misery[4] is matter of regret to His Majesty. For there is no country where such communities are not found, including others besides Brahmans and ascetics, nor is there any

[1] 'Conquered,' *vijita*; 'annexed,' *ladheshu*.

[2] That is to say, who practise the *dharma*, or Law of Piety, of which a summary is given.

[3] That is to say, they are hurt in their feelings.

[4] 'Diffused misery,' equivalent to Bühler's 'all this falls severally on men.' M. Senart denies the distributive sense of *pratibhagaṁ*, and translates (i. 309) 'toutes les violences de ce genre.'

place in any country where the people are not attached to some one sect or other[1].

The loss of even the hundredth or the thousandth part of the persons who were then slain, carried away captive, or done to death in Kalinga would now be a matter of deep regret to His Majesty.

Although a man should do him an injury, His Majesty holds that it must be patiently borne, so far as it can possibly be borne.

Even upon the forest tribes in his dominions His Majesty has compassion, and he seeks their conversion, inasmuch as the might even of His Majesty is based on repentance. They are warned to this effect—'Shun evil-doing, that ye may escape destruction'; because His Majesty desires for all animate beings security, control over the passions, peace of mind, and joyousness[2].

And this is the chiefest conquest, in His Majesty's opinion—the conquest by the Law of Piety; this also is that effected by His Majesty both in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as six hundred leagues[3]—even to where the Greek king named Antiochus dwells, and beyond that Antiochus to where dwell the four kings severally named Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas, and Alexander[4];—and in the south, the kings of the Cholas, and Pândyas,

[1] This sentence is translated from the fuller form in the Kâlsî text, as corrected by M. Senart from the newly discovered Girnâr fragment. (*J. R. A. S.* for 1900, p. 339.)

[2] 'Joyousness,' *rabhasiye* (Shâhb.), *mâdavaṁ* (Girnâr), *madava* (Kâlsî). The translation of the first sentence of this paragraph is in accordance with M. Senart's corrections.

[3] 'League,' *yojana*, a varying measure, commonly taken as equal to seven or eight miles.

[4] Antiochus Theos, of Syria; Ptolemy Philadelphus, of Egypt; Antigonus Gonatas, of Macedonia; Alexander, of Epirus; Magas, of Cyrene.

and of Ceylon[1]—and likewise here, in the King's dominions, among the Yonas, and Kambojas, in Nâbhaka of the Nâbhitis, among the Bhojas and Pitinikas, among the Andhras and Pulindas[2], everywhere men follow the Law of Piety as proclaimed by His Majesty.

Even in those regions where the envoys of His Majesty do not penetrate[3], men now practise and will continue to practise the Law of Piety as soon as they hear the pious proclamation of His Majesty issued in accordance with the Law of Piety.

And the conquest which has thereby been everywhere effected—the conquest everywhere effected, causes a feeling of delight.

Delight is found in the conquests made by the Law[4]. Nevertheless, that delight is only a small matter. His Majesty thinks nothing of much importance save what concerns the next world.

[1] The Chola capital was at Uṛaiyûr near Trichinopoly; the Pâṇḍya capital was at Madura. Tishya (Tissa) was the contemporary king of Ceylon.

[2] The Yonas (Yavanas) must mean the clans of foreign race (not necessarily Greek) on the north-western frontier, included in the empire; the Kambojas seem to have been also a north-western tribe. I cannot offer any explanation of 'Nâbhaka of the Nâbhitis' (Bühler). The Andhras inhabited the country near the Kṛishṇa river, at the southern extremity of the Kalingas. Subsequently, they established a powerful kingdom. The Pulindas seem to have occupied the central parts of the Peninsula. The Pitinikas *may* have been the inhabitants of Paithâna on the Godâverî. (See M. Senart in *Ind. Ant.* xx. 248, and *J. R. A. S.* for 1900, p. 340.) The names enumerated are those of border tribes under the suzerainty of Asoka.

[3] Missionaries were dispatched in the eleventh or twelfth year of the reign.

[4] Bühler's rendering accidentally omits the words *Ladha* [*bhoti*] *priti dhramavijayaspi*.

And for this purpose has this pious edict been written, to wit, that my sons and grandsons, as many as they may be, may not suppose it to be their duty to effect a new conquest; and that even when engaged in conquest by arms they may find pleasure in patience and gentleness, and may regard as the only true conquest that which is effected through the Law of Piety [1], which avails both for this world and the next. Let all their pleasure be the pleasure in exertion, which avails both for this world and the next.

EDICT XIV

EPILOGUE

This set of edicts [2] of the Law of Piety has been written by command of His Majesty King Priyadarsin in a form sometimes condensed, sometimes of medium length, and sometimes expanded [3]; for everything is not suitable [4] in every place, and my dominions are extensive.

Much has already been written, and I shall cause much more to be written [5].

Certain phrases in the edicts have been uttered again and again, by reason of the honeyed sweetness of such and such a topic, in the hope that the people may act up to them.

[1] I think I have given the meaning correctly, and in accordance with the intention of Bühler.

[2] *Dhaṁmalipi* is here a collective noun.

[3] The Minor Rock Edicts offer a very clear example of this practice. Several illustrations may be observed in the Fourteen Rock Edicts.

[4] 'Suitable,' *ghaṭitam*; Senart translates '*réuni*,' or 'brought together'; Kern translates 'worked out.'

[5] This promise is fulfilled in the Minor Rock Edicts, Pillar Edicts, &c.

It may be that something has been incompletely written out—if so, it is due to lack of space, or to some special reason, or to a blunder of the engraver[1].

(2) The Kalinga (so-called Separate or Detached) Rock Edicts

(Fourteenth year and later)

THE BORDERERS' EDICT

(SO-CALLED NO. II)

THE DUTIES OF OFFICIALS TO THE BORDER TRIBES[2]

Thus saith His Majesty:—

At Samâpâ the officials are to be instructed in the King's commands as follows[3]:—

I desire my views to be practically acted upon and carried into effect by suitable means; and, in my opinion, the principal means for accomplishing this object are my instructions to you.

[1] Bühler, whom I have followed, seems to be right in his interpretation of this passage; M. Senart takes a different view.

[2] This edict, called No. II by Prinsep and all subsequent writers, is manifestly a continuation of the main series, and contemporary with that series in the fourteenth year of the reign. The so-called No. I edict is of later date. It seems to me more inconvenient to retain a misleading nomenclature than to make a change. I propose to call these edicts the Kalinga Edicts; the names 'Separate Rock,' or 'Detached Rock Edicts,' being awkward and meaningless.

[3] From the Jaugaḍa text. The duplicate at Dhauli, which is not so well preserved, is addressed to the prince and magistrates at Tosali.

All men are my children[1], and, just as for my children I desire that they should enjoy all happiness and prosperity both in this world and in the next, so for all men I desire the like happiness and prosperity.

If you ask what is the King's will concerning the border tribes, I reply that my will is this concerning the borderers—that they should be convinced that the King desires them to be free from disquietude. I desire them to trust me and to be assured that they will receive from me happiness, not sorrow, and to be convinced that the King bears them good will, and I desire that (whether to win my good will or merely to please me) they should practise the Law of Piety, and so gain both this world and the next.

And for this purpose I give you instructions. When in this manner I have once for all given you my instructions and signified my orders, then my resolutions and my promises are immutable.

Understanding this, do your duty, and inspire these folk with trust, so that they may be convinced that the King is unto them even as a father, and that, as he cares for himself, so he cares for them, who are as the King's children.

Having given you my instructions, and notified to you my orders—my resolutions and promises being immutable—I expect to be well served by you in this business, because you are in a position enabling you to inspire these folk with trust and to secure their happiness and prosperity both in this world and in the next; and by so acting you will gain heaven and discharge your debt to me.

It is for this purpose that this edict has been inscribed here in order that the officials may display persevering energy in inspiring trust in these borderers and guiding them in the path of piety.

This edict should be recited every four months at the Tishya Nakshatra festival, and at discretion, as

[1] *Pajâ* (*prajâ*) means 'subjects' as well as 'children.'

occasion offers, in the intervals, it should be recited to individuals[1]. Take care by acting thus to direct people in the right way.

THE PROVINCIALS' EDICT

(SO-CALLED NO. I DETACHED OR SEPARATE EDICT; THE DHAULI TEXT[2])

THE DUTIES OF OFFICIALS TO THE PROVINCIALS

By command of His Majesty:—

At Tosali the officers in charge of the administration of the city[3] are to be instructed as follows:—

I desire my views to be practically acted upon and carried into effect by suitable means; and, in my opinion, the principal means for accomplishing this object are my instructions to you; for you have been set over many thousands of living beings to gain the affection of good men.

All men are my children, and, just as for my children I desire that they should enjoy all happiness and prosperity both in this world and in the next, so for all men I desire the like happiness and prosperity.

You, however, do not gain the best possible results[4].

[1] The year was divided into three seasons of four months each. The days of the month were named according to the constellation (*nakshatra*) in which the moon was supposed to be. Tishya is a lucky constellation.

[2] The Dhauli text is the better preserved. The corresponding Jaugaḍa text is addressed to the officers in charge of the town of Samâpâ, which has not been identified.

[3] *Mahâmâtâ* is the generic term for officials. It survives in the Hindî *mahâwat*, with the specialized sense of elephant-driver. The city was probably, like the capital, in charge of a municipal commission.

[4] This passage confirms the indication afforded by the posi-

There are individuals who heed only part of my teaching and not the whole. You must see to such persons so that the moral rule may be observed.

There are, again, individuals who have been put in prison or to torture. You must be at hand to stop unwarranted imprisonment or torture. Again, many there are who suffer acts of violence. It should be your desire to set such people in the right way.

There are, however, certain dispositions which render success impossible, namely, envy, lack of perseverance, harshness, impatience, want of application, idleness, indolence.

You, therefore, should desire to be free from such dispositions, inasmuch as the root of all this teaching consists in perseverance and patience in moral guidance. He who is indolent does not rise to his duty, and yet an officer should bestir himself, move forward, go on. The same holds good for your duty of supervision. For this reason I must repeat to you, 'Consider and know that such and such are His Majesty's instructions.' Fulfilment of these orders bears great fruit, non-fulfilment brings great calamity. By officers who fail to give such guidance neither the favour of heaven nor the favour of the King is to be hoped for. My special insistence on this duty is profitable in two ways, for by following this line of conduct you will both win heaven and discharge your debt to me.

This edict must be recited at every Tishya Nakshatra festival, and at intervals between Tishyas, as occasion offers, it should be read to individuals. And do you take care by acting thus to direct people in the right way.

For this purpose has this edict been inscribed here in order that the officers in charge of the city may display persevering zeal to prevent unwarranted imprisonment or unwarranted torture of the citizens.

And for this purpose, in accordance with the Law of

tion of this edict on the rock that it is of later date than the so-called No. I.

Piety[1], every five years I shall cause to be summoned to the Assembly those men who are mild, patient, and who respect life[2], in order that hearing these things they may act according to my instructions.

And the Prince of Ujjain shall for the same purpose summon an Assembly of the same kind, but he must perform this duty every three years without fail. The same order applies to Taxila.

The officials attending the Assembly, while not neglecting their special duties, will also learn this teaching, and must see that they act according to the King's instructions.

(3) The Minor Rock Edicts

(*Eighteenth year*)

MINOR ROCK EDICT, NO. I

(THE BRAHMAGIRI TEXT[3])

THE FRUIT OF EXERTION

By order of the Prince and magistrates at Suvarnagiri, the magistrates at Isila, after greetings, are to be addressed as follows[4]:—

[1] *Dhaṁmate*; M. Senart translates 'régulièrement.'

[2] M. Senart takes this description as equivalent to 'Buddhists,' and believes that the Assembly (*anusaṁyâna*) was composed of Buddhists only. These Assemblies were first instituted in the thirteenth year.

[3] Three recensions of this edict and the next exist on rocks at and near Siddâpura in Mysore, namely, at Siddâpura itself, at Jaṭinga-Râmeśara, and at Brahmagiri. The last named, being the most perfect, has been translated. Variant recensions of the first edict alone occur at Sahasrâm in Bengal, at Rûpnâth in the Central Provinces, and at Bairât in Râjputâna. Of these three recensions that at Rûpnâth is the best preserved, and a translation of it is given.

[4] 'The Prince,' governor or viceroy of the South, stationed at

His Majesty commands:—

For more than two years and a half I was a lay disciple without exerting myself strenuously. A period of six years, or rather more than six years, has elapsed since I joined the Order[1] and have strenuously exerted myself, and during this time the men who were, all over India, regarded as true, have been, with their gods, shown to be untrue[2].

For this is the fruit of exertion, which is not to be obtained for himself by the great man only; because even the small man can, if he choose, by exertion win for himself much heavenly bliss.

For this purpose has been proclaimed this precept, namely[3]—'Let small and great exert themselves to this end.'

My neighbours, too, should learn this lesson; and may such exertion long endure!

And this purpose will grow—yea, it will grow vastly—at least half as great again will be its growth.

And this precept was proclaimed by the Departed. 256 [years have elapsed since then?][4].

Suvarnagiri, which has not been identified. 'Magistrates,' or 'officials,' *mahâmâtâ*. 'After greetings,' literally, 'to be wished good health.' The heading of this edict is of interest as a specimen of official style in the days of Asoka.

[1] I agree with Bühler and Prof. Kern that this is the only legitimate interpretation.

[2] 'All over India,' *Jambudipasi*. Compare the Rûpnâth recension. The primary reference is to the Brahmans. When their authority was rejected, their gods were also deposed.

[3] 'Proclaimed this precept,' *sâvane savâpite*. The words (replaced in Rûpnâth text by *savane kaṭe*) are repeated in the puzzling final sentence, which consequently refers only to the brief maxim, 'Let small and great exert themselves.' Bühler's rendering of *sâvane* by 'sermon' is not suitable to a laconic precept.

[4] This passage is the most puzzling one in the whole series of edicts, and nobody has yet succeeded in devising a convincing

THE SAME EDICT

(RÛPNÂTH TEXT)

Thus saith His Majesty:—

For more than two years and a half I continued to be a hearer of the Law[1] without exerting myself strenuously. A period, however, of more than six years has elapsed since I joined the Order and have strenuously exerted myself.

interpretation. Bühler to the last (*Ind. Ant.* xxii. 302) maintained that *vyuṭhenâ* (*vivuthena*), 'the Departed,' meant Śâkyamuni Buddha, and that the numerals 256 express the period elapsed since his death. *If* this view be correct, and it seems, perhaps, less open to objection than the rival interpretations, the date of the Buddha's death would be fixed in or about the year B.C. 508, a date which seems to be historically unobjectionable, provided that the Ceylonese chronology is disregarded. The calculation stands thus:—

	B.C.
Coronation of Asoka	269
Conquest of Kalinga in 9th year; Asoka becomes a lay disciple	261
2½ years of moderate exertion, plus about 6½ years of strenuous exertion, total about 9 years, from B.C. 261 to date of Minor Rock Edicts	252
To this add 256, and the result for Śâkyamuni Buddha's death is	508

The mysterious passage is given in a fuller form in the Rûpnâth and Sahasrâm texts. The translation of the Rûpnâth recension follows.

M. Senart thinks that the reference is to the departure of 256 missionaries, and this interpretation is tempting, if not quite convincing. M. Boyer (*Journal Asiatique*, Nov.–Dec. 1898) suggests that the Buddha's departure from his home is the event alluded to. This suggestion does not seem to be sound.

[1] 'Hearer of the Law,' *savake*, corresponding to *upâsike*, 'lay disciple,' in the Brahmagiri text.

The gods who at that time, all over India, were regarded as true gods have now become untrue gods.

For this is the fruit of exertion, which is not to be obtained by the great man only; because even the small man can by exertion win for himself much heavenly bliss.

And for this purpose was given the precept, 'Let small and great exert themselves.'

My neighbours, too, should learn this lesson; and may such exertion long endure!

For this purpose of mine will grow its growth—yea, it will grow vastly—at least half as large again will be its growth.

And this purpose has been written on the rocks, both here and in distant places; and wherever a stone pillar exists, it must be written on the stone pillar.

And as often as a man seasons his cooked food with this condiment he will be satisfied even to satiety [or, in alternative, 'as often as a man applies deep thought to this writing, he will rejoice at being able to subdue his senses[1]'].

This precept has been given by the Departed. 256 [years have elapsed] from the departure of the Teacher [?].

THE SECOND MINOR ROCK EDICT

(BRAHMAGIRI TEXT)

SUMMARY OF THE LAW OF PIETY[2]

Thus saith His Majesty:—

Father and mother must be obeyed; similarly, respect for living creatures must be enforced; truth

[1] Bühler's interpretation.

[2] Compare with the summaries of the Law of Piety given in Rock Edicts III, IV, IX, XI, and Pillar Edict VII. The notable difference in style proves that the second edict of the Siddâpura group of texts was composed in the office of the Southern Viceroy.

must be spoken. These are the virtues of the Law of Piety which must be practised. Similarly, the teacher must be reverenced by the pupil, and proper courtesy must be shown to relations.

This is the ancient standard of piety—this leads to length of days, and according to this men must act.

(Written by Pada the scribe [1].)

(4) The Bhabra Edict

(Probably eighteenth year of the reign)

THE BHABRA EDICT

ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY OF MAGADHA

King Piyadasi sends greeting to the Magadhan clergy [2] and wishes them prosperity and good health:—

Ye know, Reverend Sirs, how great is my respect for and devotion to the Buddha, the Law, and the Assembly of the Clergy [3].

Reverend Sirs, all that has been said by the Venerable Buddha has been well said, and yet, Reverend Sirs, so far as I may give instructions

[1] The scribe's signature is in the Aramaic character, written from right to left, now generally known by the name of Kharoshṭhî.

[2] 'Magadhan,' *mâgadhaṁ*, 'of Magadha,' or Bihâr. As M. Senart suggests, the word here is probably equivalent to 'Buddhist,' Magadha having been the birthplace of Buddhism. The assertion sometimes made that this edict is addressed to the Council said to have been held at Pâṭaliputra is not warranted by evidence.

[3] The famous Buddhist Triad, or *triratna*. 'The Law,' *dhaṁmasi*, means here the whole body of Buddhist doctrine, and not only those principles of practical piety which are expounded in the edicts addressed to the general public.

on my own account, I venture to adduce the word of the Buddha, to wit, 'Thus the Good Law [1] will long endure.'

Reverend Sirs, these passages of the Law, namely:—

[1] 'The Exaltation of Discipline' (*vinaya samukasa*);

[2] 'The Supernatural Powers of the Aryas' (*aliya vasâni*);

[3] 'Fears of what may happen' (*anâgata bhayâni*);

[4] 'The Song of the Hermit' (*muni gâthâ*);

[5] 'The Dialogue on the Hermit's Life' (*moneya sûte*);

[6] 'The Questioning of Upatishya' (*upatisa pasine*); and—

[7] 'The Address to Râhula, beginning with the subject of Falsehood' (*lâghulovâde musâvâdam adhigichya*):—

those passages of the Law [2] were uttered by the Venerable Buddha; and I desire that many monks and nuns should frequently listen to these passages, and meditate upon them, and that the laity, male and female, should do the same.

For this reason, Reverend Sirs, I have caused this to be written, so that people may know my wishes.

[1] 'The Good Law,' *sadhamme*, = *saddharma*. M. Senart adopts this rendering in his revised version in *Ind. Ant.* xx. 165. Prof. E. Hardy has pointed out (*J.R.A.S.* for 1901, pp. 314, 577) that the saying about the Good Law is a quotation from the scriptures.

[2] 'Passages,' *paliyâyâni* (Rhys Davids). Out of the seven passages five have now been identified in the Nikâya portion of the scriptures, as follows:—

No. 2. Dîgha, Sangâti Sutta;
„ 3. Anguttara, iii. 105–108;
„ 4. Sutta-Nipâta, 206–220;
„ 5. It., No. 67 = A, i. 272;
„ 7. Majjhima, i. 414–420.

(Rhys Davids in *J. R. A. S.* for 1898, p. 639; and 'Dialogues of the Buddha,' p. xiii.)

CHAPTER V

The Cave and Pillar Inscriptions

(*Thirteenth to twenty-eighth year of reign*)

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(1) The Cave Inscriptions

(*Thirteenth and twentieth years of reign*)

INSCRIPTIONS IN THE CAVES OF BARÂBAR HILL

BESTOWAL OF CAVE-DWELLINGS ON THE AJÎVIKAS

Inscription A, or No. I:—

'King Piyadasi, in the thirteenth year of his reign, bestowed this "banyan-tree cave" on the Ajîvikas.'

Inscription B, or No. II:—

'King Piyadasi, in the thirteenth year of his reign, bestowed this cave in the Khalatika hill on the Ajîvikas.'

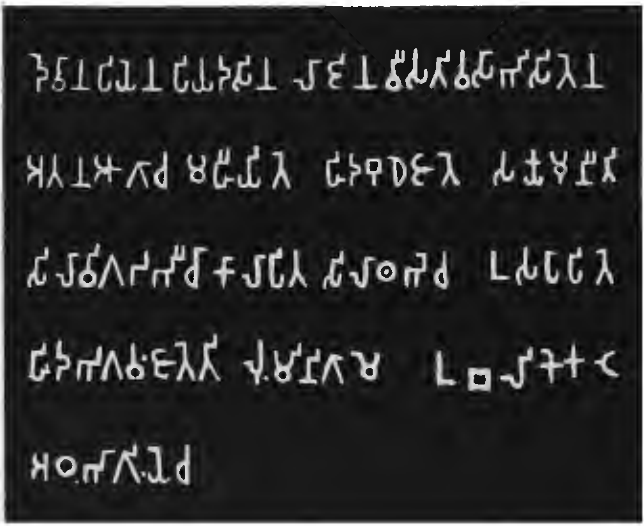
Inscription C, or No. III:—

'King Piyadasi, in the twentieth year of his reign, [bestowed this cave . . .']

Although out of chronological order, the connected inscriptions of Asoka's grandson Dasaratha may be most conveniently noticed in this place. They are three in number (D, E, F), and record in identical terms the bestowal of three caves, severally named

PLATE II

FACSIMILE



TRANSLITERATION

1. Devânapiyena piyadasina lâjina visativasâbhisitena
2. atana âgâcha mahîyite hida budhe jâte sakyamuniti
3. silâ vigaḍabhichâ kâlâpita silâthabhecha usapâpite
4. hida bhagavaṁ jâteti luṁminigâme ubalikekaṭe
5 aṭhabhâgiyecha

ASOKA'S INSCRIPTION ON THE RUMMINDEÎ PILLAR

From impression taken by Dr. Führer]

[To face p. 145

Vahiyakâ, Gopikâ, and Vadathika, in the Nâgârjuni hill, by Dasaratha on the occasion of his accession, upon the Ajîvikas. A translation of one will suffice.

VAHIYAKÂ CAVE INSCRIPTION (D) OF DASARATHA

This Vahiyakâ Cave was bestowed by His Majesty Dasaratha, immediately after his accession, on the venerable Ajîvikas, to be a dwelling-place for them, as long as sun and moon endure[1].

(2) The Inscriptions of the Tarâi Pillars

(*Twenty-first year of reign*)

THE RUMMINDEÎ (PADERIÂ) PILLAR

COMMEMORATION OF VISIT TO BIRTH-PLACE OF SÂKYAMUNI BUDDHA

His Majesty King Piyadasi, in the twenty-first year of his reign, having come in person, did reverence. Because here Buddha the Sâkya ascetic was born, he had a stone horse made, and set up a stone pillar. Because here the Venerable One was born, the village of Lummini has been made revenue-free, and has partaken of the King's bounty[2].

[1] The Ajîvikas were a sect of Brahmanical ascetics, devoted to Nârâyaṇa, a form of Vishṇu, who occupy a very prominent place in the ancient history of Indian religions. Inscription No. III is too much damaged to admit of translation. The restoration in the *Corpus* is not trustworthy. I have used Bühler's facsimiles and transcripts in *Ind. Ant.* xx. 361.

[2] Every letter of this inscription is perfect, but some of the words have not been met with elsewhere, and have occasioned discussion. There seems to be little doubt that *vigadabhî*

THE NIGLÎVA PILLAR INSCRIPTION

COMMEMORATION OF VISIT TO THE *STÛPA* OF KONÂKAMANA BUDDHA

His Majesty King Piyadasi in the fifteenth year of his reign enlarged for the second time the *stûpa* of Buddha Konâkamana, and [in the twenty-first year] of his reign, having come in person, he did reverence, and set up [a stone pillar][1].

(3) The Seven Pillar Edicts

(*Twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth years of reign*)

EDICT I

THE PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

In the twenty-seventh year of my reign I caused this pious edict to be written.

It is difficult to secure both this world and the next save by the utmost devotion to the Law of Piety, the

means 'in the form of a horse.' Hiuen Tsiang records that the pillar had the statue of a horse on the summit. The suggestion has recently been made that *vigadabhi* should be translated 'ass.' *Aṭhabhâgiye* is best derived from *artha*, and literally rendered as 'sharer in wealth.' (See *Epigr. Ind.* v. 4; *J. R. A. S.*, Jan. 1898, p. 618.)

[1] *Konâkamana* = Pâlî *Koṇâgamana*, Sanskrit *Kanakamuni*. The inscription is imperfect, but may safely be referred to the same year as the Rummindeî inscription, which it so closely resembles. The distance between the two pillars is now about thirteen miles, but the Niglîva pillar has been moved from its original position. (See Bâbû P. C. Mukherjî's 'Report on Explorations in the Nepalese Terai,' with Prefatory Note by Vincent A. Smith, in *Reports, Archaeol. Survey of India*, Imperial Series, Calcutta, 1900.)

utmost watchfulness, the utmost obedience, the utmost dread, the utmost energy.

However, owing to my instructions, this yearning for and devotion to the Law of Piety have grown from day to day, and will continue to grow.

My agents too, whether of high, low, or middle rank, themselves conform to my teaching, and lead the people in the right way, being in a position to recall to duty the fickle-minded, as likewise are the wardens of the marches.

For this is the rule—protection according to the Law of Piety, regulation by that law, felicity by that law, and security by that law [1].

EDICT II

THE ROYAL EXAMPLE

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

The Law of Piety is excellent.

But what is the Law of Piety?

It requires innocuousness, many good deeds, compassion, truthfulness, purity.

The gift of spiritual insight I have given in manifold ways [2]; whilst on two-footed and four-footed beings, on birds, and on the denizens of the waters have conferred many benefactions—even unto the boon of life; and many other good deeds have I done [3].

[1] I have followed M. Senart (*Ind. Ant.* xvii. 304) in interpreting this edict as being primarily addressed to the officials.

[2] 'The gift of spiritual insight,' *chakhu-dâne*. 'The metaphorical use of *chakhu*, in Sanskrit *chakshus*, "eye," for "spiritual insight or knowledge," is common with all Hindu sects. Piyadasi alludes here to the *dhaṁmasâvanâni* and *dhaṁmânusathini*, "sermons on, and instruction in, the sacred law," of which he speaks more fully below (vii. 2, l. 1): compare also *dhaṁmadâne* (Rock Edict XI and the note to the latter passage).' Bühler in *Ep. Ind.* ii. 250.

[3] This phrase occurs also in Rock Edict V.

For this purpose I have caused this pious edict to be written, that men may walk after its teaching, and that it may long endure; and he who will follow its teaching will do well.

EDICT III

SELF-EXAMINATION

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

Man sees his every good deed, and says, 'This good deed have I done.'

In no wise does he see his evil deed and say, 'This evil deed, this thing in the nature of sin, have I done.'

Difficult, verily, is the needful [1] self-examination.

Nevertheless, a man should see to this, that rage, cruelty, anger, pride, and jealousy are in the nature of sin, and should say, 'Let me not by reason of these things bring about my fall.'

This is chiefly to be seen to—'The one course avails me for the present world, the other course avails me at any rate for the world to come [2].'

EDICT IV

THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMISSIONERS [3]

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

In the twenty-seventh year of my reign I caused this pious edict to be written.

[1] 'The needful,' *esâ*; literally 'this.'

[2] The text is absolutely certain, and the emendations suggested by M. Senart are inadmissible. I have followed Bühler, (*Ep. Ind.* ii. 251). 'The one course,' giving way to the passions; 'the other course,' restraining the passions by the aid of self-examination.

[3] 'Commissioners,' *lajûkâ* (*rajjûkâ*), high officers intermediate in rank between the governors and the district officers (*pradeśikâ*).

Commissioners have been appointed by me to rule over many hundred thousand persons of the people, and to them I have granted independence in the award of honours and penalties [1], in order that they may in security and without fear perform their duties, and bestow welfare and happiness on the people of the country, and confer benefits upon them.

The commissioners will ascertain the causes of happiness and unhappiness, and will, in accordance with the Law of Piety, exhort the people of the country so that they may gain both this world and the next.

My commissioners are eager to serve me, and my agents [2], knowing my will, are likewise ready to serve me, and will, when necessary, give exhortations, whereby the commissioners will be zealous to win my favour.

For, as a man feels secure after making over his child to a skilful nurse, and says to himself, 'The skilful nurse is devoted to the care of my child,' even so have I appointed commissioners for the welfare and happiness of the country; and, in order that they may with fearlessness, security, and confidence perform their duties, I have granted to the commissioners independence in the award of honours and penalties.

Forasmuch as it is desirable that uniformity should exist in administration and in penal procedure [3] my order extends so far, namely: 'To prisoners con-

[1] Bühler's interpretation.

[2] 'Agents,' *pulisâni*, Skr. *purushâḥ*, literally 'men'; probably the *paṭivedakâ* of Rock Edict VI, and the ἐπίσκοποι of Megasthenes.

[3] I connect this clause with the order following; *samatâ* can then be given its usual meaning of 'uniformity,' and the connexion of the whole passage becomes clear. With this exception, I follow Bühler. The uniformity enforced is merely in the respite granted to condemned criminals, not a general uniformity of penal procedure.

victed and sentenced to death a respite of three days is granted by me.' During this interval the relatives of some at least of the condemned men will invite them to deep meditation, hoping to save their lives, or, if that may not be, they will present votive offerings and undergo fasts to promote the pious meditations of those about to die [1].

For my desire is that the condemned, even during their imprisonment, may gain the next world, and that among the people pious practices of various kinds may grow, along with self-restraint and generous liberality.

EDICT V

REGULATIONS RESTRICTING SLAUGHTER AND MUTILATION OF ANIMALS

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi :—

In the twenty-seventh year of my reign the following animals were exempted from slaughter, namely :—

Parrots, starlings, (?) adjutants (*aruna*), Brahmani ducks, geese, *nandimukhas*, *gelâtas*, (?) flying foxes (*jatukas*), queen-ants [2], terrapins (i.e. small tortoises), (?) prawns, *vedavayakas*, *gangâpuputakas*, skate, tortoises, porcupines, (?) squirrels (*paṁnasasa*), (?) *bârasingha* stags (*srimara*), dedicated bulls [3], (?) lizards (*okapiṇḍa*), rhinoceros, grey doves, village pigeons, and all fourfooted animals which are not eaten or otherwise utilized by man.

[1] The translation has been amplified a little in order to bring out the meaning clearly.

[2] The queen-ant is eaten as an aphrodisiac.

[3] 'Dedicated bulls,' the familiar 'Brahmanee bulls,' which have been dedicated in pursuance of vows, and wander unchecked over the fields. The slaughter of one of these animals gives great offence to Hindoos.

She-goats, ewes, and sows, whether with young or in milk, must not be slaughtered, nor may their young, up to six months of age.

Caponing cocks is forbidden.

Chaff containing living things must not be burned[1].

Forests must not be burned, either for mischief, or to injure living creatures[2].

The living must not be fed with the living[3]. At each of the three seasonal full moons, and at the full moon of the month Tishya (December–January), for three days in each case, namely, the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the first fortnight, and the first days of the second fortnight, as well as on the fast days throughout the year, fish may neither be killed nor sold.

On the same days, no other animals living in elephant-preserves or fish-ponds may be destroyed.

On the eighth, the fourteenth, and the fifteenth day of each fortnight, as well as on the Tishya and Punarvasu days, on the seasonal full-moon days, and on the days of popular festivals, bulls, he-goats, rams, and boars may not be castrated; nor may any other animal which is commonly castrated be castrated on those days.

On the Tishya and Punarvasu days, on the seasonal full-moon days, and during the full-moon fortnights, the branding of horses and oxen is forbidden[4].

[1] Chaff on a threshing-floor is sometimes burned in order to destroy vermin.

[2] A forest is sometimes fired wantonly, sometimes in order to promote the growth of grass, and sometimes to drive out game.

[3] As hawks with the blood of living pigeons, a cruel practice still in vogue.

[4] In ancient India the year was divided into three seasons, the hot, rainy, and cold. The three full moons referred to are probably those of the months *Phâlguna* (Feb.–March), *Âshâḍha* (June–July), *Kârttika* (Oct.–Nov.). 'Tishya and Punarvasu days' mean the days of the month on which the moon is, or is

In the period extending up to my twenty-sixth coronation day I have twenty-five times liberated the prisoners [1].

EDICT VI

THE NECESSITY IN ALL SECTS FOR PERSONAL DEVOTION

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

In the thirteenth year of my reign I had pious edicts written to promote the welfare and happiness of the people [2], with the intent that the people, rejecting their old vices [3], might attain unto growth in piety.

Thus, aiming at the welfare and happiness of the people, I devote my attention to those far and near as much as to my own relatives, if haply I may guide some of them to happiness.

In the same way I devote my attention to all communities [4]. All sects have been reverenced by me with

supposed to be, in the asterism or constellation (*nakshatra*) so-named. In each month there were four fast-days. The number of days in the year on which the killing and sale of fish was forbidden amounted to fifty-six. (See full discussion by Bühler in *Ep. Ind.* ii. 261–265; and Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 99.)

[1] Literally 'made twenty-five jail deliveries.' The king means that on each anniversary of his coronation he published a general pardon of all convicts, most of whom must have been awaiting execution.

[2] 'Pious edicts,' that is to say the Rock Edicts, among which Nos. III and IV are expressly dated in the thirteenth year.

[3] 'Rejecting their old vices,' a paraphrase of *tam apahaṭa*, in accordance with Bühler's view. M. Senart renders 'carrying away something,' that is to say, from the teaching of the Rock Edicts.

[4] 'All communities,' *savanikâyesu*. The renderings 'corporations' (Bühler) and 'the whole body of my officers' (Senart) are both too definite. Compare Rock Edict XIII, 'For there is

various forms of reverence[1]. Nevertheless, personal adherence to a man's particular creed seems to me the chief thing[2].

In the twenty-seventh year of my reign this pious edict was written by my command.

EDICT VII[3]

THE KING'S MEASURES FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE LAW OF PIETY[4]

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

The kings who lived in past times desired that man might somehow develop the growth of the Law of Piety. Mankind, however, did not develop the growth of the Law of Piety according to expectation.

Therefore, thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

This thought occurred to me:—The kings who lived in past times desired that mankind might somehow develop the growth of the Law of Piety, but mankind

no country in which are not found such communities (*nikâyâ*), including others besides Brahmans and ascetics.'

[1] Compare the opening sentence of Rock Edict XII.

[2] 'Personal adherence to a man's particular creed,' *atunâ pachûpagamane* (Senart). This interpretation seems preferable to that of Bühler, 'the approach through one's own free will,' that is to say 'the voluntary approach which one sect is to make towards the other,' as recommended in Rock Edict XII.

[3] In the older editions erroneously treated as two edicts, Nos. VII and VIII.

[4] This important edict, which is a key to and commentary on the whole of the Piyadasi inscriptions, comprises a preamble, the recital of eight measures taken to promote piety, and an epilogue. The eight measures are (1) sermons; (2) inscribed pillars; (3) arrangements for comfort of man and beast; (4) institution of censors; (5) institution of Royal Almoner's department; (6) the king's personal example; (7) detailed pious regulations; (8) encouragement of meditation on principles.

did not develop the growth of the Law of Piety according to expectation. By what means then can mankind be induced to obey? by what means can mankind develop the growth of piety according to expectation? by what means can I raise up at least some of them so as to develop the growth of piety?

Therefore, thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

This thought occurred to me:—I will cause sermons on the Law of Piety to be preached, and with instructions in that law will I instruct, so that men hearkening thereto may obey, raise themselves up, and greatly develop the growth of piety.

For this my purpose I have caused sermons on the Law of Piety to be preached, I have disseminated various instructions on that law, and I have appointed agents[1] among the multitude to expound and develop my teaching.

Commissioners[2] have been appointed by me over many thousands of souls, with instructions to expound my teaching in such and such a manner among the lieges.

Thus saith His Majesty Piyadasi[3]:—

Considering further the same purpose, I have set up pillars of the Law, I have appointed censors of the Law[4], and preached sermons on the Law of Piety.

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

On the roads I have had banyan-trees planted to give shade to man and beast; I have had groves of mango-trees planted; at every half *kos* I have had wells dug; rest-houses have been erected; and numerous watering-places have been prepared here and there for the enjoyment of man and beast[5].

[1] 'Agents,' *pulisâ*. See note 2, p. 149 above.

[2] 'Commissioners,' *lajûkâ*. See note 3, p. 148 above.

[3] Note omission of the word 'King.'

[4] 'Censors of the Law,' *dhaṁmamahâmâtâ*.

[5] Refers to Rock Edict II. See notes 1 and 2, p. 80 above.

That so-called enjoyment, however, is a small matter.

With various blessings have former kings blessed the world even as I have done, but in my case it has been done solely with the intent that men may yield obedience to the Law of Piety.

Thus saith His Majesty Piyadasi:—

My censors of the Law of Piety are occupied with various charitable institutions, with ascetics, householders, and all the sects; I have also arranged that they should be occupied with the affairs of the Buddhist clergy, as well as with the Brahmans, the Jains, the Ajîvikas, and, in fact, with all the various sects[1].

The several ordinary magistrates shall severally superintend their particular charges, whereas the censors of the Law of Piety shall superintend all sects as well as such special charges.

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

These and many other high officials are employed in the distribution of the royal alms, both my own and those of the queens[2]; and in all the royal households both at the capital and in the provinces these officials indicate in divers ways the manifold opportunities for charity[3].

The same officials are also employed by me in the distribution of the alms of my wives' sons and of the

[1] Refers to Rock Edict V. Compare Rock Edict XII. Some of the verbiage in the original has been omitted in the translation.

[2] See the Queen's Edict, *post*, p. 157.

[3] 'I here follow Professor Kern, *Der Buddhismus*, vol. ii, p. 386, who takes *tuṭhâyatanâni*, i. e. *tushṭyâyatanâni*, "sources of contentment," in the sense of "opportunities for charity." Such opportunities are to be pointed out to all the inmates of the King's harem' (Bühler, *Ep. Ind.* ii. 274). I translate *olodhanasi*, 'household,' rather than 'harem,' because the seclusion of women was not the custom of ancient India.

queens' sons[1], in order to promote pious acts and the practice of piety. For pious acts and the practice of piety depend on the growth among men of compassion, liberality, truth, purity, gentleness, and goodness.

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

Whatsoever meritorious deeds I have done, those deeds the people have copied and will imitate, whence follows the consequence that growth is now taking place and will further increase in the virtues of obedience to father and mother, obedience to teachers, reverence to the aged, and kindly treatment of Brahmans and ascetics, of the poor and wretched, yea, even of slaves and servants[2].

Thus saith His Majesty King Piyadasi:—

This growth of piety among men has been effected by two means, namely, by pious regulations and by meditation. Of these two means pious regulations are of small account, whereas meditation is of greater value.

Nevertheless, I have passed pious regulations forbidding the slaughter of such and such animals, and other regulations of the sort. But the effect of meditation is seen in the greater growth of piety among men, and the more complete abstention from injury to animate creatures and from slaughter of living beings[3].

This proclamation has been made with the intent that it may endure as long as my descendants[4] continue and sun and moon exist[5], and that men may practise

[1] The distinction intended, I think, is between the sons of the queens-consort and those of the inferior wives. See note, p. 157. Bühler supposes that the queens alluded to are the wives of the king's predecessors.

[2] See Rock Edicts IV, IX, XI; Pillar Edict II.

[3] Refers to Rock Edict I; Pillar Edict V. See also Rock Edict IX.

[4] 'Descendants,' literally 'sons and great-grandsons.'

[5] Compare the inscriptions of Dasaratha.

my teaching. By the practice of this teaching the gain is secured both of the present world and of the world to come.

In the twenty-eighth year of my reign I ordered this pious edict to be written.

Concerning this, thus saith His Majesty: Wheresoever stone pillars or stone tablets exist, there let this edict be inscribed, so that it may long endure.

(4) The Supplementary Pillar Edicts

(*Twenty-eighth year of reign or later*)

THE QUEEN'S EDICT

THE DONATIONS OF THE SECOND QUEEN

By command of His Majesty the officials everywhere are to be instructed that—

Whatever donation has been made by the second queen, be it a mango-grove, pleasure-garden, charitable hostel, or aught else, is to be accounted as the act of that queen. These things are [? all to gain merit for] the second queen, Kârûvakî, the mother of Tîvara [1].

THE KAUSÂMBÎ EDICT

DONATION TO BUDDHIST MONASTERY

This document, which is found, like the Queen's Edict, on the Allahabad pillar, is too imperfect to

[1] This edict, edited by Bühler in *Ind. Ant.* xix. 125, is perfect, except for five or six characters expressing the purpose. I have supplied a conjectural interpretation. The document is of interest in several respects. It proves that Asoka had at least two consorts who ranked as queens (*devî*), that the second of these ladies was named Kârûvakî (Kâlûvakî), and that the king had a son by her named Tîvara (Tîvala). It is possible to read the son's name as Titîvala. The inscription is in the Mâgadhî dialect, which replaces Sanskrit medial *r* by *l*.

admit of continuous translation. Part of it is reproduced in the equally defaced inscription on the Sânchi pillar, which seems to record the donation of a road or procession path to a monastery[1]

[1] Bühler, *Ind. Ant.* xix. 124, 126; *Epigr. Ind.* ii. 366.

CHAPTER VI

The Ceylonese Legend of Asoka

The legends related in this chapter and in that following are related simply as legends, without criticism, or discussion of their historical value [1].

THE CONVERSION OF ASOKA

Kâlâsoka, king of Magadha, had ten sons, who after his death ruled the kingdom righteously for twenty-two years. They were succeeded by other nine brothers, the Nandas, who likewise, in order of seniority, ruled the kingdom for twenty-two years [2].

[1] The legends told in this chapter have been compiled by combining the narratives of the Dîpavaṁsa and the Mahâvaṁsa, which may fairly be combined, both being derived from the traditions preserved at the Mahâvihâra monastery. Wijesinha's revised edition of Turnour's translation of the Mahâvaṁsa (Colombo, Government Record Office, 1889) has been used. His corrections of Turnour's version are material. For the Dîpavaṁsa, Oldenberg's edition and translation have been used. The indexes to Turnour's Mahâvaṁsa and Oldenberg's Dîpavaṁsa make easy the verification of particular statements. Another summary of the legends will be found in Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*.

[2] Turnour omits the words 'the Nandas.' The Dîpavaṁsa substitutes Susunâga for Kâlâsoka, makes Asoka to be the son of Susunâga, and omits all mention of the nine Nanda brothers, and their reign of twenty-two years (*Dip*. v. 25, 97–99). These discrepancies prove the untrustworthiness of the chronicles.

A Brahman named Chânakya, who had conceived an implacable hatred against Dhana Nanda, the last survivor of the nine brothers, put that king to death, and placed upon the throne Chandra Gupta, a member of the princely Maurya clan, who assumed the sovereignty of all India, and reigned gloriously for twenty-four years[1]. He was succeeded by his son Bindusâra, who ruled the land for twenty-eight years.

The sons of Bindusâra, the offspring of sixteen mothers, numbered one hundred and one, of whom the eldest was named Sumana, and the youngest Tishya (Tissa). A third son, Asoka, uterine brother of Tishya, had been appointed Viceroy of Western India by his father. On receiving news of King Bindusâra's mortal illness, Asoka quitted Ujjain, the seat of his government, and hastened to Pâtaliputra (Patna), the capital of the empire. On his arrival at the capital, he slew his eldest brother Sumana, and ninety-eight other brothers, saving alive but one, Tishya, the youngest of all. Having thus secured his throne, Asoka became lord of all India, but by reason of the massacre of his brothers he was known as Asoka the Wicked.

Now it so happened that when Prince Sumana was slain, his wife was with child. She fled from the slaughter, and was obliged to seek shelter in a village

[1] Not 'thirty-four years,' as given both by Turnour and Wijesinha. The figure 34 is a copyist's blunder; see commentary quoted by Turnour, p. lii (Rhys Davids, *Ancient Coins and Measures of Ceylon*, p. 41, note).

of outcastes beyond the eastern gate. The headman of the outcastes, pitying her misery, entreated her kindly, and, doing her reverence, served her faithfully for seven years. On that very day on which she was driven forth from the palace she gave birth to a boy, on whom the name Nigrodha was bestowed. The child was born with the marks of sanctity, and when he attained the age of seven was already an ordained monk.

The holy child, whose royal origin was not known, happened one day to pass by the palace, and attracted the attention of the king, who was struck by his grave and reverend deportment. King Asoka, highly delighted, sent for the boy, who drew near with decorum and self-possession.

The king said, 'My child, take any seat which thou thinkest befitting.' Nigrodha, seeing that no priest other than himself was present, advanced towards the royal throne as the befitting seat. Whereupon King Asoka, understanding that this monk was destined to become lord of the palace, gave the boy his arm, and seating him upon the throne, refreshed him with meat and drink prepared for his own royal use.

Having thus shown his respect, the king questioned the boy monk concerning the doctrines of Buddha, and received from him an exposition of the doctrine of earnestness, to the effect that 'earnestness is the way to immortality, indifference is the way to death.' This teaching so wrought upon the heart of the king, that he at once accepted the religion of Buddha, and gave

gifts to the priesthood. The next day Nigrodha returned to the palace with thirty-two priests, and, by preaching the law, established king and people in the faith and the practice of piety. In this manner was King Asoka constrained to abandon the Brahmanical faith of his father, and to accept as a lay disciple the sacred law of Buddha.

These things happened in the fourth year after the accession of King Asoka, who in the same year celebrated his solemn coronation, and appointed his younger brother Tishya to be his deputy or vicegerent.

The sixty thousand Brahmans, who for three years had daily enjoyed the bounty of Asoka, as they had enjoyed that of his predecessors on the throne, were dismissed, and in their place Buddhist monks in equal numbers were constantly entertained at the palace, and treated with such lavish generosity that four lakhs of treasure were each day expended. One day, the king, having feasted the monks at the palace, inquired the number of the sections of the law, and having learned that the sections of the law were eighty-four thousand in number, he resolved to dedicate a sacred edifice to each. Wherefore, the king commanded the local rulers to erect eighty-four thousand sacred edifices in as many towns of India, and himself constructed the Asokârâma at the capital. All the edifices were completed within three years, and in a single day the news of their completion reached the Court. By means of the supernatural

powers with which he was gifted, King Asoka was enabled to behold at one glance all these works throughout the empire.

From the time of his consecration as emperor of India, two hundred and eighteen years after the death of the perfect Buddha, the miraculous faculties of royal majesty entered into King Asoka, and the glory which he obtained by his merit extended a league above and a league below the earth.

The denizens of heaven were his servants, and daily brought for his use water from the holy lake, luscious, fragrant fruits, and other good things beyond measure and without stint.

The king, lamenting that he had been born too late to behold the Buddha in the flesh, besought the aid of the Snake-King, who caused to appear a most enchanting image of Buddha, in the full perfection of beauty, surrounded by a halo of glory, and surmounted by the lambent flame of sanctity, in honour of which glorious vision a magnificent festival was held for the space of seven days.

THE STORY OF MAHENDRA AND SANGHAMITRÂ, AND THE CONVERSION OF CEYLON

While Asoka during his royal father's lifetime was stationed at Ujjain as viceroy of the Avanti country, he formed a connexion with a lady of the Setthî caste, named Devî, who resided at Vedisagiri (Besnagar near Bhilsâ)[1]. She accompanied the prince to Ujjain,

[1] Turnour's text reads 'Chetiyagiri.'

and there bore to him a son named Mahendra, two hundred and four years after the death of Buddha [1]. Two years later a daughter named Sanghamitrâ was born. Devî continued to reside at Vedisagiri after Asoka seized the throne; but the children accompanied their father to the capital, where Sanghamitrâ was given in marriage to Agni Brahmâ, nephew of the king, to whom she bore a son named Sumana.

In the fourth year after King Asoka's coronation, his brother Tishya, the vicegerent, his nephew Agni Brahmâ, and his grandson Sumana were all ordained. The king, who had received the news of the completion of the eighty-four thousand sacred edifices, held a solemn assembly of millions of monks and nuns, and, coming in full state in person, took up his station in the midst of the priesthood. The king's piety had by this time washed away the stain of fratricide, and he who had been known as Asoka the Wicked, was henceforth celebrated as Asoka the Pious.

After his brother Tishya had devoted himself to religion, Asoka proposed to replace him in the office of vicegerent by Prince Mahendra, but at the urgent entreaty of his spiritual director, Tishya son of Moggali (Mudgâlya), the king was persuaded to permit of the ordination both of Mahendra and his sister Sanghamitrâ. The young prince had then attained the canonical age of twenty, and was therefore at once ordained. The princess assumed the yellow robe, but was obliged to defer her admission to the Order

[1] This date is given by the Dîpavaṁsa, vi. 20, 21.

for two years, until she should attain full age. Mahendra was ordained in the sixth year of the king's reign, dating from his coronation.

In the eighth year of the reign, two saints, named respectively Sumitra and Tishya, died. Their death was attended with such portents that the world at large became greatly devoted to the Buddhist religion, and the liberality of the people to the priests was multiplied. The profits so obtained attracted to the Order many unworthy members, who set up their own doctrines as the doctrines of Buddha, and performed unlawful rites and ceremonies, even sacrifices after the manner of the Brahmans, as seemed good unto them. Hence was wrought confusion both in the doctrine and ritual of the Church.

The disorders waxed so great that the heretics outnumbered the true believers, the regular rites of the church were in abeyance for seven years, and the king's spiritual director, Tishya son of Moggali, was obliged to commit his disciples to the care of Prince Mahendra, and himself to retire into solitude among the mountains at the source of the Ganges.

Tishya, the son of Moggali, having been persuaded to quit his retreat, expelled the heretics, produced the Kathâvatthu treatise, and held the Third Council of the Church at the Asokârâma in Pâtaliputra. These events happened in the year 236 after the death of Buddha, and seventeen and a half years after the coronation of King Asoka.

In the same year King Devânampiya Tissa (Tishya)

ascended the throne of Ceylon, and became the firm friend and ally of King Asoka, although the two sovereigns never met. The King of Ceylon, in order to show his friendship and respect, dispatched a mission to India, headed by his nephew, Mahâ Arittha. In seven days the envoys reached the port of Tâmalipti (Tamlûk in Bengal), and in seven days more arrived at the Imperial Court. They were royally entertained by King Asoka, who was graciously pleased to accept the rich and rare presents sent by his ally, in return for which he sent gifts of equal value. The envoys remained at the capital for five months, and then returned to the island by the way they had come, bearing to their sovereign this message from King Asoka: 'I have taken refuge in the Buddha, the Law, and the Order; I have avowed myself a lay disciple of the doctrine of the son of the Sâkyas. Imbue your mind also with faith in this Triad, in the highest religion of the Jina; take refuge in the Teacher.'

After the close of the Third Council, which remained in session for nine months, Tishya the son of Moggali resolved that the law of Buddha should be communicated to foreign countries, and dispatched missionaries to Kashmîr and Gandhâra; to Mahîsamandala (Mysore); to Vanavâsi (North Kanara); to Aparantaka (coast north of Bombay); to Mahârâshtra; to the Yavana country (on the north-western frontier); to the mountain regions of the Himâlaya; to Suvarnabhûmi (Pegu); and to Ceylon.

The mission to Ceylon consisted of Prince Mahendra and five colleagues, of whom one was Sumana, his sister's son.

Mahendra resolved, with the king's permission, to visit his mother and her relations on his way to Ceylon, and devoted six months to this purpose.

He found his mother at her home in Vedisagiri, and, having been received with great joy, was accommodated in the splendid monastery at that place which she had erected [1]. The preaching of Mahendra converted Bhandu, a grandnephew of his mother. After this event Mahendra lingered for another month, and then with his companions, to whom Bhandu attached himself, rose aloft into the air, and flying, 'as flies the king of swans,' arrived in Ceylon, and alighted upon the Missa mountain.

The first discourse pronounced by the leader of the mission converted the king, with forty thousand of his followers. The princess Anulâ, with five hundred of her attendants, desired to enter the Order, but was told that the male missionaries had no power to ordain females, who, however, might be ordained by the princess Sanghamitrâ.

The king of Ceylon, after due deliberation, again dispatched his nephew to King Asoka, with instructions to bring back Sanghamitrâ and a branch of the sacred *bo*-tree. King Asoka, although grieving sorely at the separation from his beloved daughter, gave his

[1] The allusion seems to be to the splendid buildings at Sânchi, about five miles south-west from Besnagar.

consent to her deputation to Ceylon, and proceeded with much ceremony to sever a branch of the holy tree.

The severance was effected, signalized by many miracles, and the envoys, accompanied by Sanghamitrâ, were dispatched to the port of Tâmalipti, escorted by an army commanded by King Asoka in person.

'The vessel in which the *bo*-tree was embarked briskly dashed through the water; and in the great ocean, through the circumference of a league, the waves were stilled; flowers of the five different colours blossomed around it, and various melodies of music rang in the air.' The holy branch, thus miraculously wafted to the shore of the island, was received with due honour, and was planted in the Mahâmegha garden, which the king had dedicated to the use of the Order. The branch threw off eight vigorous shoots, which were distributed and planted in as many localities.

In those days also the king of Ceylon built for Mahendra the Mahâvihâra, the first monastery of the island, and the construction of the Chetiyagiri (Mihintalé) monastery followed soon after.

The princess Anulâ, in company with five hundred virgins and five hundred women of the palace, was duly ordained as a nun by Sanghamitrâ, and straightway attained the rank of *Arhat*. The king erected a nunnery for Sanghamitrâ, who there abode in peace, until she died in the fifty-ninth year after her ordination, that being the ninth year of the reign of the Ceylonese King Uttiya. Her brother Mahendra

had passed away in the previous year, while observing the sixtieth 'retreat' since his ordination.

While King Asoka was engaged in the festivals connected with the dispatch of the branch of the *bo*-tree, another mission, headed by his grandson Sumana, arrived from Ceylon to beg for relics to be enshrined in the great *stûpa* by the island king. The request of this second mission also was granted by King Asoka, who bestowed upon his ally a dishful of holy relics, to which Sakra, lord of the Devas, added the right collar-bone of Buddha, extracted from the Chulâmani *stûpa*. The relics were received with extreme honour, and enshrined with due ceremony in the Thûpârâma *stûpa*, the moment being marked by a terrific earthquake. Witnessing this miracle, the people were converted in crowds, and the king's younger brother joined the Order, which in those days received an accession of thirty thousand monks.

THE LEGEND OF THE THIRD CHURCH COUNCIL[1]

When, as has been related, the heretics waxed great in numbers and wrought confusion in the Church, so that for seven years the rite of confession and other solemn rites remained in abeyance, King

[1] See especially Dîpavaṁsa, i. 25; v. 55; vii. 37, 41, 56–59. The dates do not seem all to agree, but the intention evidently is to place the Third Council in 236, and the Second Council in 118 *Anno Buddhae*, the two intervals of 118 years being exactly equal. One of the Chinese dates for Asoka is 118 A. B. (I-tsing, ed. Takakusu, p. 14).

Asoka determined that the disorder should cease, and sent a minister to the Asokârâma to compel the monks to resume the services. The minister, having gone there, assembled the monks and proclaimed the royal commands. The holy men replied that they could not perform the services while the heretics remained. Thereupon the minister, exceeding his instructions, with his own hand smote off the heads of several of the contumacious ecclesiastics as they sat in convocation. The king's brother Tishya interfered, and prevented further violence.

The king was profoundly horrified and greatly alarmed at the rash act of his minister, and sought absolution. In accordance with the advice of the clergy, the aged Tishya, son of Moggali, was summoned from his distant retreat, and conveyed by boat down the Ganges to the capital, where he was received by the king with extraordinary honour and reverence.

Asoka, desiring to test the supernatural powers of the saint, begged that a miracle might be performed, and specially requested that an earthquake confined to a limited space might be produced. The saint placed a chariot, a horse, a man, and a vessel filled with water, one on each side of a square space, exactly on the boundary lines, and produced an earthquake which caused the half of each object within the boundary line to quake, while the other half of each remained unshaken. Satisfied by this display of power, Asoka inquired if the sacrilegious murder of the priests by the minister must be accounted as the

king's sin. The saint ruled that where there is no wilful intention, there is no sin, and, accordingly, absolved Asoka, whom he instructed fully in the truth.

The king commanded that all the priests in India, without exception, should be assembled, and taking his seat by the side of his spiritual director, examined each priest individually as to his faith. The saint decided that the doctrine of the Vaibâdhyavâdina school was the true primitive teaching of the master, and all dissenters were expelled, to the number of sixty thousand [1]. A thousand orthodox priests of holy character were then selected to form a convocation or Council. To these assembled priests, Tishya, son of Moggali, recited the treatise called Kathâvatthu in order to dissipate doubts on points of faith [2]. The Council, following the procedure of the First Council at Râjagriha and the Second Council at Vaisâli, recited

[1] Mahâvaṁsa, ch. v. The classifications of the Buddhist schools vary much. I-tsing (pp. xxiii, 7) says that all Ceylon belonged to the *Ârya-sthavira-nikâya*, which had three subdivisions. Tibetan authorities (Rockhill, pp. 187 *seqq.*) make two main divisions of Buddhists, (i) *Sthavira*, (ii) *Mahâsanghika.* The *Sarvâstivâdina* school was a subdivision of the *Sthavira*, and the *Vaibâdhyavâdina* was a sect of the *Sarvâstivâdina.* The *Vaibâdhyavâdina* sect again was subdivided into four sections, *Mahîśâsaka*, *Dharmaguptaka*, *Tamraśatiya*, and *Kâśyapiya.* This explains how Fâ-hien was able to obtain in Ceylon a copy of the Vinaya according to the *Mahîśâsaka* school (ch. xl).

The legends have probably been much influenced by sectarian bias.

[2] Turnour's translation is corrected by Wijesinha.

and verified the whole body of the scriptures, and, after a session lasting nine months, dispersed. At the conclusion of the Council the earth quaked, as if to say 'Well done,' beholding the re-establishment of religion. Tishya, the son of Moggali, was then seventy-two years of age.

THE STORY OF TISHYA, THE VICEGERENT

One day, Tishya, the younger brother of Asoka, and Vicegerent of the empire, happened to be in a forest, and watched a herd of elk at play. The thought occurred to him that when elks browsing in the forest divert themselves, there seems to be no good reason why monks well lodged and well fed in monasteries should not amuse themselves. Coming home, the vicegerent told his thoughts to the king, who, in order to make him understand the reason why, conferred upon him the sovereignty for the space of seven days, saying, 'Prince, govern the empire for seven days, at the end of which I shall put thee to death.' At the close of the seventh day the king asked the prince:—'Why art thou grown so wasted?' He replied, 'By reason of the horror of death.' The king rejoined, 'Child, thou hast ceased to amuse thyself, because thou thinkest that in seven days thou wilt be put to death. These monks are meditating without ceasing on death; how then can they engage in frivolous diversions?'[1]

[1] Compare the legend of Mahendra in chapter vii, *post*.

The prince understood, and became a convert. Some time afterwards he was on a hunting expedition in the forest, when he saw the saint Mahâdharmarakshita, a man of perfect piety and freed from the bonds of sin, sitting under a tree, and being fanned with a branch by an elephant. The prince, beholding this sight, longed for the time when he might become even as that saint and dwell at peace in the forest. The saint, in order to incline the heart of the prince unto the faith, soared into the air and alighted on the surface of the water of the Asokârâma tank, wherein he bathed, while his robes remained poised in the air. The prince was so delighted with this miracle that he at once resolved to become a monk, and begged the king for permission to receive ordination.

The king, being unwilling to thwart his pious desire, himself led the prince to the monastery, where ordination was conferred by the saint Mahâdharmarakshita. At the same time one hundred thousand other persons were ordained, and no man can tell the number of those who became monks by reason of the example set by the prince.

THE LAST DAYS OF ASOKA

The branch of the holy *bo*-tree, brought to Ceylon in the manner above related, was dispatched in the eighteenth year of the reign of Asoka the Pious, and planted in the Mahâmeghavana garden in Ceylon.

In the twelfth year after that event, Asandhimitrâ,

the beloved queen of Asoka, who had shared his devotion to Buddhism, died. In the fourth year after her decease, the king, prompted by sensual passion, raised the princess Tishyarakshitâ to the dignity of queen-consort. She was young and vain, and very sensible of her personal charms. The king's devotion to the *bo*-tree seemed to her to be a slight to her attractions, and in the fourth year after her elevation her jealousy induced her to make an attempt to destroy the holy tree by art magic. The attempt failed. In the fourth year after that event, King Asoka the Pious fulfilled the lot of mortality, having reigned thirty-seven years[1].

[1] Compare the legend of the 'Dotage of Asoka' in chapter vii, *post*. According to the Tibetan tradition, Asoka reigned for fifty-four years (Rockhill, p. 233).

CHAPTER VII

The Indian Legends of Asoka

THE LINEAGE AND FAMILY OF ASOKA

(1) King Bimbisâra reigned at Râjagriha. His son was (2) Ajâtasatru, whose son was (3) Udayibhadra, whose son was (4) Munda, whose son was (5) Kâkavarnin, whose son was (6) Sahâlin, whose son was (7) Tulakuchi, whose son was (8) Mahâmandala, whose son was (9) Prasenajit, whose son was (10) Nanda, whose son was (11) Bindusâra.

King Bindusâra reigned at Pâtaliputra, and had a son named Susîma.

A certain Brahman of Champâ had a lovely daughter. A prophecy declared that she was destined to be the mother of two sons, of whom one would become universal monarch, and the other would attain the goal of the life of a recluse. The Brahman, seeking the fulfilment of the prophecy, succeeded in introducing his daughter into the palace, but the jealousy of the queens debarred her from the royal embraces, and assigned to

[1] The genealogy as given in the text is from the prose *Asokâvadâna* in the *Divyâvadâna* (Burnouf, *Introduction*, pp. 319 *seqq.*). The reader will observe that Chandragupta is omitted, and that Bindusâra, the father of Asoka, is represented as being the son of Nanda. The metrical *Asokâvadâna* (Râjendralâla Mitra, *Nepalese Buddhist Literature*, pp. 6–17) substitutes Mahîpâla for Ajâtasatru, and exhibits other minor variations.

her the menial duties of a barber. After some time the girl managed to explain to the king that she was no barber, but the daughter of a Brahman. When the king understood that she belonged to a caste with a member of which he could honourably consort, he at once took her into favour and made her chief queen. In due course, the Brahman's daughter, whose name was Subhadrângî, bore to the king two sons, the elder named Asoka, and the younger named Vigatâsoka.

The ascetic Pingala Vatsâjiva, when consulted by King Bindusâra concerning the destiny of the two boys, feared to tell his sovereign the truth, because Asoka was rough-looking and displeasing in the sight of his father; but he frankly told Queen Subhadrângî that her son Asoka was destined for the throne.

It came to pass that King Bindusâra desired to besiege Taxila, which was in rebellion. The king ordered his despised son Asoka to undertake the siege, and yet would not supply him with chariots or the needful munitions of war. Ill-supplied as he was, the prince obediently started to carry out the king's orders, whereupon the earth opened, and from her bosom supplied all his wants. When Asoka with his army approached Taxila, the citizens came forth to meet him, protesting that their quarrel was only with oppressive ministers, not with the king or the king's son. Taxila and the kingdom of the Svasas made their submission to the prince, who in due course returned to the capital.

It came to pass that one day Prince Susîma, the king's eldest son, was coming into the palace from the garden when he playfully threw his glove at the head of the prime minister Khallâtaka. The minister was deeply offended, and from that day engaged in a conspiracy with five hundred privy councillors to exclude Susîma, and to place Asoka on the throne.

The people of Taxila again revolted, and Prince Susîma, who was deputed to reduce them to obedience, failed in his task. King Bindusâra, who was then old and ill, desired to send Asoka to Taxila, and to recall Susîma, that he might take up the succession.

The ministers, however, continued to exclude the elder prince, and to secure the throne for Asoka, on whose head the gods themselves placed the crown, at the moment when his father expired. Susîma marched against Pâtaliputra, to assert his rights and expel the usurper; but Asoka and his minister Râdhagupta obtained the services of naked giants, who successfully guarded the gates, and by stratagem Susîma was inveigled, so that he fell into a ditch full of burning fuel, and there miserably perished.

THE TYRANNY AND CONVERSION OF ASOKA

One day, when five hundred of his ministers ventured to resist the royal will, Asoka, transported with rage, drew his sword, and with his own hand cut off the heads of all the offenders.

Another day, the women of the palace, whom Asoka's rough features failed to please, mocked him by breaking off the leaves of an *asoka* tree in the garden. The king, when he heard of the incident, caused five hundred women to be burnt alive.

The ministers, horrified at these acts of cruelty, entreated the king not to defile his royal hands with blood, but to appoint an executioner to carry out sentences.

The king accepted this advice, and a man named Chandagirika—a wretch of unexampled cruelty, who loved to torture animals, and had slain his father and mother—was sought out and appointed Chief Executioner. For his use the king caused to be built a prison, which had a most attractive exterior, so that men might be tempted to enter it, and thus suffer all the tortures of hell which awaited them within; for the king had commanded that no man who entered this prison should leave it alive.

One day, a holy ascetic named Bâlapandita[1] unwittingly entered the gate, and was instantly seized by the jailer. The holy man, though given seven days' respite, was at the end of the term of grace ruthlessly cast into a seething cauldron of filth, beneath which a great fire was kindled. The cruel jailer, looking in, beheld the saint, seated on a lotus, and unscathed by fire. The miracle having been reported to the palace, the king himself came to see it, and being converted by the sight and the preaching

[1] Samudra in the metrical version.

of the holy man, embraced the true religion and forsook the paths of wickedness.

The prison was demolished, and the jailer was burnt alive.

The above legend from the *Asokâvadâna*, which is given with further details by Hiuen Tsiang (Beal, ii. 86), places the 'prison' or 'hell' at Pâtaliputra the capital.

Another form of the legend, which is merely referred to by Hiuen Tsiang without comment, places the 'hell' at Ujjain in Mâlwa (Beal, ii. 271).

The conversion of the king, according to Hiuen Tsiang, was due to the great saint Upagupta, whom he met after the destruction of the 'hell.' With the aid of Upagupta, King Asoka summoned the genii and commanded them to build *stûpas* throughout the land for the reception of the relics of Buddha's body, which had been taken out of the eight *stûpas* where they had originally been enshrined after the cremation of the Sâkya sage. At the moment of a solar eclipse the genii, in obedience to the commands of the king and the saint, simultaneously deposited the relics in all the *stûpas.*

The *Avadâna* story is that when King Asoka desired to distribute the sacred relics of the body of Buddha among the eighty-four thousand *stûpas* erected by himself, he opened the *Stûpa* of the Urn, wherein King Ajâtasatru had enshrined the cremation relics collected from seven of the eight original *stûpas.* The eighth, that at Râmagrâma, was defended by the

guardian Nâgas, who would not allow it to be opened. The relics thus withdrawn from the *Stûpa* of the Urn were distributed among eighty-four thousand *stûpas*, 'resplendent as the autumn clouds,' which were erected in a single day by the descendant of the Mauryas. 'The worshipful, the fortunate Maurya caused the erection of all these *stûpas* for the benefit of created beings; formerly he was called on earth Asoka the Wicked, but this good work has earned for him the name of Asoka the Pious[1].'

The metrical *Avadâna* is still more extravagant than the prose form of the tale, and alleges that 3,510 millions of *stûpas* were erected at the request of the people of Taxila, and that ten millions were erected by the Yakshas on the shores of the sea.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF ASOKA

Having erected the eighty-four thousand *stûpas*, King Asoka expressed a desire to visit the holy places of his religion. By the advice of his counsellors he sent for the saint Upagupta, son of Gupta the perfumer. Upagupta had been in accordance with prophecy born a century after the death of Buddha, and, when summoned by the king, was dwelling on Mount Urumunda in the Natabhatika forest near Mathurâ.

The saint accepted the royal invitation, and, accom-

[1] This passage proves that the hero of the *Asokâvadâna* is Asoka Maurya.

panied by eighteen thousand holy men, travelled in state by boat down the Jumna and Ganges to Pâtaliputra, where he was received with the utmost reverence and honour[1].

The king said: 'I desire to visit all the places where the Venerable Buddha stayed, to do honour unto them, and to mark each with an enduring memorial for the instruction of the most remote posterity.' The saint approved of the project, and undertook to act as guide. Escorted by a mighty army the monarch visited all the holy places in order.

The first place visited was the Lumbini Garden. Here Upagupta said: 'In this spot, great king, the Venerable One was born[2]'; and added: 'Here is the first monument consecrated in honour of the Buddha, the sight of whom is excellent. Here, the moment after his birth, the recluse took seven steps upon the ground.'

The king bestowed a hundred thousand gold pieces on the people of the place, and built a *stûpa.* He then passed on to Kapilavastu.

The royal pilgrim next visited the Bodhi-tree at Buddha Gayâ, and there also gave a largess of a hundred thousand gold pieces, and built a *chaitya.* Rishipatana (Sârnâth) near Benares, where Gautama had 'turned the wheel of the law,' and Kusinagara, where the Teacher had passed away, were also visited

[1] Compare the story of Tishya, son of Moggali, in the 'Legend of the Third Church Council' in chapter vi, p. 170, above.

[2] Compare the Rummindeî pillar inscription in chapter v.

with similar observances. At Srâvastî the pilgrims did reverence to the Jetavana monastery, where Gautama had so long dwelt and taught, and to the *stûpas* of his disciples, Sâriputra, Maudgalâyana, and Mahâ Kâsyapa. But when the king visited the *stûpa* of Vakkula, he gave only one copper coin, inasmuch as Vakkula had met with few obstacles in the path of holiness, and had done little good to his fellow creatures. At the *stûpa* of Ânanda, the faithful attendant of Gautama, the royal gift amounted to six million gold pieces.

THE STORY OF VÎTÂSOKA.

Vîtâsoka, the king's brother[1], was an adherent of the Tîrthyas, who reproached the Buddhist monks as being men who loved pleasure and feared pain. Asoka's efforts to convert his brother were met by the retort that the king was merely a tool in the hands of the monks. The king therefore resolved to effect his brother's conversion by stratagem.

At his instigation the ministers tricked Vîtâsoka into the assumption of the insignia of royalty. The king when informed of what had happened feigned great anger, and threatened his brother with instant death. Ultimately he was persuaded to grant the offender seven days' respite, and to permit him to exercise sovereign power during those seven days. During this period the fear of death so wrought upon

[1] Vîtâsoka = Vigatâsoka.

the mind of Vîtâsoka that he embraced the doctrine of Buddha, in which he was instructed by the holy Sthavira Yasas. With difficulty the king was persuaded by the Sthavira Yasas[1] to grant to his brother permission to become a monk. In order to initiate the novice gradually into the habits of the life of a mendicant friar, Asoka prepared a hermitage for him within the palace grounds. From this hermitage Vîtâsoka withdrew, first to the Kukkutârâma monastery, and afterwards to Videha (Tirhût), where he attained to the rank of a saint (*arhat*). When Vîtâsoka, clad in rags, returned to the palace, he was received with great honour, and was induced to exhibit his supernatural powers. He then again withdrew to a distant retreat beyond the frontier, where he fell ill. Asoka sent him medicine, and he recovered.

In those days it happened that a devoted adherent of the Brahman ascetics threw down and broke a statue of Buddha at Pundra Vardhana in Bengal. As a penalty for the sacrilege eighteen thousand inhabitants of that city were massacred in one day by order of Asoka. Some time after another fanatic at Pâtaliputra similarly overthrew a statue of Buddha. The persons concerned, with all their relatives and friends, were

[1] The Ceylonese Mahâvaṁsa (ch. iv) represents the Sthavira Yasas (Yaso) as a leading personage at the Second or Vaisâli Council in the reign of Kâlâsoka, or Asoka I. This fact is one of the many indications that Kâlâsoka is a fiction, and that no reliance can be placed on the accounts of any of the three church councils.

burned alive, and the king placed the price of a *dînâra* on the head of every Brahmanical ascetic.

Now, when the proclamation was published Vîtâsoka, clad in his beggar's garb, happened to be lodging for the night in the hut of a cowherd. The good wife, seeing the unkempt and dishevelled appearance of her guest, was convinced that he must be one of the proclaimed ascetics, and persuaded her husband to slay him in order to earn the reward. The cowherd carried his victim's head to the king, who was horrified at the sight, and was persuaded by his ministers to revoke the proclamation. Not only did he revoke the cruel proclamation, but he gave the world peace by ordaining that henceforth no one should be put to death [1].

In Fâ-hien's version of the legend the brother of the king is anonymous. The pilgrim tells us that the younger brother of King Asoka lived the life of a recluse on the Vulture's Peak hill near Râjagriha, where he had attained to the rank of a saint (*arhat*). The king invited the recluse to the palace, but the invitation was declined. The king then promised that if his brother would accept the invitation, he would make a hill for him inside the city. 'Then the king, providing all sorts of meat and drink, invited the genii, and addressed them thus: "I beg you to accept my invitation for to-morrow; but as there are no seats, I must request you each to bring

[1] The inscriptions prove that Asoka did not abolish capital punishment.

his own." On the morrow the great genii came, each one bringing with him a great stone, four or five paces square. After the feast, he deputed the genii to pile up their seats, and make a great stone mountain; and at the base of the mountain with five great square stones to make a rock chamber, in length about 35 feet, and in breadth 22 feet, and in height 71 feet or so.'

The same story is told by Hiuen Tsiang in order to explain the origin of the stone dwelling which was still to be seen at Pâtaliputra in the seventh century A.D.[1] The name of Mahendra is given to the hermit-prince by Hiuen Tsiang, who relates of him a legend, which may be compared with that of Vîtâsoka. The two stories have some points in common.

THE STORY OF MAHENDRA, AND THE CONVERSION OF CEYLON

King Asoka early in his reign had a half-brother, the son of his mother, who was younger than the king, and belonged to a noble family. The young man was extravagant, wasteful, and cruel in disposition. In his dress also he aped the royal costume.

The indignation of the people became so great that the ministers ventured to remonstrate with the king,

[1] Beal, ii. 91. Major Waddell identifies Mahendra's Hill with the Bhikhna Pahârî at Patna, on which the Nawâb's palace stands, and states that the neighbouring *muhalla*, or ward, is called Mahendru.

and to say: 'Your majesty's brother in his pride assumes a dignity beyond his due. When the government is impartial, the subjects are contented; when the subjects are content, the sovereign is at peace. We desire that you should preserve the principles of government handed down to us by our fathers, and that you should deliver to justice the men who seek to change those principles.'

Then King Asoka, weeping, addressed his brother and said: 'I have inherited from my ancestors the duty of protecting my people; how is it that you, my own brother, have forgotten my affection and kindness? It is impossible for me at the very beginning of my reign to disregard the laws. If I punish you, I dread the resentment of my ancestors; if I pass over your transgressions, I dread the ill opinion of my people.'

The prince, bowing his head, admitted his error, and begged for nothing more than a respite of seven days[1]. The king granted this request, and threw his brother into a dark dungeon, though he provided him with exquisite food and all other luxuries. At the end of the first day the guard cried out to the prisoner: 'One day has gone; six days are left.' By the time the sixth day had expired, the prisoner's repentance and discipline were complete. He attained at once to the rank of a saint (*arhat*), and feeling conscious of miraculous powers, ascended into the air.

[1] Compare the Ceylonese 'Story of Tishya, the Vicegerent' in chapter vi, p. 172, above.

Asoka went in person to the dungeon, and told his brother that having now, contrary to expectation, attained the highest degree of holiness he might return to his place. Mahendra replied that he had lost all taste for the pleasures of the world, and desired to live in solitude. Asoka consented, but pointed out that it was unnecessary for the prince to retire to the mountains, as a hermitage could be constructed at the capital. The king then caused the genii to build a stone house, as already related.

Mahendra, after his conversion, journeyed to the south of India, and built a monastery in the delta of the Kâverî (Cauvery), of which the ruins were still visible a thousand years later[1].

He is also related to have made use of his supernatural powers to pass through the air to Ceylon, in which island he spread the knowledge of the true law, and widely diffused the doctrine bequeathed to his disciples by the Master. From the time of Mahendra, the people of Ceylon, who had been addicted to a corrupt form of religion, forsook their ancient errors and heartily accepted the truth. The conversion of Ceylon, according to Hiuen Tsiang, took place one hundred years after the death of Buddha[2].

[1] Beal, ii. 231.

[2] Beal, ii. 246. Compare the legends of the Mahâvaṁsa and Dîpavaṁsa. Hiuen Tsiang, like the *Asokâvadâna*, placed Asoka Maurya a century after Buddha, the date assigned by the Ceylonese legend to Kâlâsoka.

THE STORY OF KUNÂLA

In the seventh century A.D. pilgrims were shown a *stûpa* at Taxila, which was said to have been built by Asoka to mark the spot where the eyes of his beloved son Kunâla were torn out. The story of Kunâla is to the following effect.

After the death of his faithful consort Asandhimitrâ, King Asoka, late in life, married Tishyarakshitâ, a dissolute and unprincipled young woman. She cast amorous glances on her stepson Kunâla, her worthy predecessor's son, who was famous for the beauty of his eyes. The virtuous prince rejected with horror the advances made by his stepmother, who then became filled with 'the spite of contemned beauty[1],' and changed her hot love into bitter hate. In pursuance of a deep-laid scheme for the destruction of him who by his virtue had put her vice to shame, the queen with honied words persuaded the king to depute Kunâla to the government of distant Taxila.

The prince obediently accepted the honourable commission, and when departing was warned by his father to verify orders received, which, if genuine, would be sealed with an impression of the king's teeth[2]. The queen bided her time, with ever-growing

[1] *Spretae iniuria formae* (Vergil).

[2] Mr. Beal has cited an exact English parallel in the verses describing the gift of lands to the Rawdon family, as quoted in Burke's *Peerage*, *s. v.* Hastings:—

hatred. After the lapse of some months she wrote a dispatch, addressed to the viceroy's ministers at Taxila, directing them immediately on receipt of the orders to put out the eyes of the viceroy, Prince Kunâla, to lead him and his wife into the mountains, and to there leave them to perish.

She sealed the dispatch with royal red wax, and, when the king was asleep, furtively stamped the wax with the impression of his teeth, and sent off the orders with all speed to Taxila. The ministers who received the orders knew not what to do. The prince, noticing their confusion, compelled them to explain. The ministers wished to compromise by detaining the prince in custody, pending a reference to the capital. But the prince would not permit of any delay, and said: 'My father, if he has ordered my death, must be obeyed; and the seal of his teeth is a sure sign of the correctness of the orders. No mistake is possible.' He then commanded an outcaste wretch to pluck out his eyes. The order was obeyed, and the prince, accompanied by his faithful wife, wandered forth in sightless misery to beg his bread.

In the course of their weary wanderings they arrived at Pâtaliputra. 'Alas,' cried the blind man, 'what

'I, William, king, the third of my reign,
Give to Paulyn Rawdon, Hope and Hopetowne,
. . . .
And in token that this thing is sooth,
I bit the whyt wax with my tooth.
Before Meg, Mawd, and Margery,
And my third son Henry.' (*Ind. Ant.* ix. 86.)

pain I suffer from cold and hunger. I was a prince; I am a beggar. Would that I could make myself known, and get redress for the false accusations brought against me.' He managed to penetrate into an inner court of the palace, where he lifted up his voice and wept, and, to the sound of a lute, sang a song full of sadness.

The king in an upper chamber heard the strains, and thinking that he recognized the voice and touch as those of his son, sent for the minstrel. The king, when he beheld his sightless son, was overwhelmed with grief, and inquired by whose contrivance all this misery had come about. The prince humbly replied: 'In truth, for lack of filial piety I have thus been punished by Heaven. On such and such a day suddenly came a loving order, and I, having no means of excusing myself, dared not shrink from the punishment.'

The king, knowing in his heart that Queen Tishyarakshitâ was guilty of the crime, without further inquiry caused her to be burnt alive, and visited with condign punishment every person, high or low, who had any share in the outrage. The officials were some dismissed, some banished, some executed. The common people were, according to one account, massacred, and, according to another, transported across the Himâlayas to the deserts of Khoten[1].

[1] Beal, i. 143, ii. 310; Burnouf, p. 360. Compare the wild Tibetan legends about the introduction of Buddhism into Khoten in Rockhill, *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 232 *seqq.* These

In those days a great saint named Ghosha dwelt in the monastery by the holy tree of Mahâbodhi. To him the king brought Kunâla, and prayed that his son might receive his sight. The saint commanded that on the morrow a great congregation should assemble to hear his preaching of the Law, and that each person should bring a vessel to receive his tears. A vast multitude of men and women assembled, and there was not one of those who heard the sermon but was moved to tears, which fell into the vessels provided.

The saint collected the tears in a golden vase, and said these words: 'The doctrine which I have expounded is the most mysterious of Buddha's teaching; if that exposition is not true, if there is error in what I have said, then let things remain as they are; but, if what I have said is true and free from error, let this man, after washing his eyes with these tears, receive his sight.'

Whereupon Kunâla washed in the tears and received his sight.

A STORY OF TISHYARAKSHITÂ

Tishyarakshitâ, queen of King Asoka, in pursuance of her incestuous passion for her stepson, Prince Kunâla, who repulsed her advances, resolved to avenge herself, and, in order to accomplish her purpose, took advan-

legends mention the saint Yaśas as the minister of Asoka the Pious. The story of Kunâla is folklore. Compare the legend of Phaedra and Hippolytus, and Jâtaka No. 472 (*Mahâpaduma*) in the translation by Mr. Rouse, who cites other Indian parallels (vol. iv, p. 117).

tage of the king's sufferings from a dangerous and apparently incurable disease, to acquire complete control over his mind, and for some days she was granted unrestrained use of the sovereign power.

Asoka, believing his malady to be incurable, gave the order: 'Send for Kunâla; I wish to place him on the throne. What use is life to me?' Tishyarakshitâ hearing these words, thought to herself: 'If Kunâla ascends the throne, I am lost.' Accordingly she said to King Asoka: 'I undertake to restore you to health, but a necessary condition is that you forbid all physicians to have access to the palace.' The king complied with her request, and she enjoined everybody to bring to her any person, man or woman, who might be suffering from the same malady as the king.

Now it happened that a man of the shepherd caste was suffering from the same malady. His wife explained his case to a physician, who promised to prescribe a suitable remedy after examining the patient. The man then consulted the physician, who brought him to Queen Tishyarakshitâ. She had him conveyed to a secret place, where he was put to death. When his body was opened she perceived in his stomach a huge worm, which had deranged the bodily functions. She applied pounded pepper and ginger without effect, but when the worm was touched with an onion, he died immediately, and passed out of the intestines. The queen then begged the king to eat an onion and so recover his health. The king replied: 'Queen, I am a Kshatriya; how can I eat an onion?'

'My lord,' answered the queen, 'you should swallow it merely as physic in order to save your life.' The king then ate the onion, and the worm died, passing out of the intestines [1].

THE DOTAGE OF KING ASOKA

The king resolved to give a thousand millions of gold pieces to the Master's service, and when far advanced in years had actually given nine hundred and sixty millions. In the hope that the vow would be completed before he died he daily sent great treasures of silver and gold to the Kukkutârâma monastery at the capital. In those days Sampadî, the son of Kunâla [2], was heir-apparent. To him the ministers pointed out that the king was ruining himself by his extravagance, and would, if permitted to continue it, be unable to resist the attacks of other monarchs or to protect the kingdom.

The prince, therefore, forbade the treasurer to comply with the king's demands. Asoka, unable to obtain

[1] Fâ-hien (ch. xvi) notes that the inhabitants of Gangetic India did not 'eat garlic or onions, with the exception of Chaṇḍâlas (outcastes) only.' The prejudice exists to this day. The high-caste people perceive in onions a fanciful resemblance to flesh meat. This story is from the Kunâla section of the *Divyâvadâna* in Burnouf, 'Introduction,' p. 133.

[2] The Jain legends represent Sampadî as a great patron of the Jain church. Nothing authentic is known about him. The legend of Asoka's dotage is given by Burnouf, pp. 381 *seqq.* Compare the Ceylonese story of 'The Last Days of Asoka' in chapter vi, *ante*, p. 173.

supplies from the treasury, began to give away the plate which furnished the royal table, first the gold, next the silver, and finally the iron. When all the metallic ware had been exhausted, the ministers furnished the king's table with earthenware. Then Asoka demanded of them, 'Who is king of this country?' The ministers did obeisance and respectfully replied: 'Your majesty is king.' Asoka burst into tears, and cried: 'Why do you say from kindness what is not true? I am fallen from my royal state. Save this half-apple[1] there is nought of which I can dispose as sovereign.' Then the king sent the half-apple to the Kukkutârâma monastery, to be divided among the monks, who should be addressed in this wise: 'Behold, this is my last gift; to this pass have come the riches of the emperor of India. My royalty and my power have departed; deprived of health, of physic, and of physicians, to me no support is left save that of the Assembly of the saints. Eat this fruit, which is offered with the intent that the whole Assembly may partake of it, my last gift.'

Once more King Asoka asked his minister Râdhagupta: 'Who is sovereign of this country?' The minister did obeisance and respectfully replied: 'Sire, your majesty is sovereign of this country.'

King Asoka, recovering his composure, responded in verse, and said:—

This earth, encinctured by its sapphire zone,
This earth, bedecked with gleaming jewels rare,

[1] *Amalaka* fruit, *Emblica officinalis.*

This earth, of hills the everlasting throne,
This earth, of all creation mother fair,
I give to the Assembly.

The blessing which attends such gift be mine;
Not Indra's halls nor Brahmâ's courts I crave,
Nor yet the splendours which round monarchs shine,
And pass away, like rushing Gangâ's wave,
Abiding not a moment.

With faith unchangeable, which nought can shake,
This gift of Earth's immeasurable sphere
I to the Saints' Assembly freely make;
And self-control I crave, of boons most dear,
A good which changeth never[1].

King Asoka, having thus spoken, sealed the deed of gift, and presently fulfilled the law of mortality.

The forty millions of gold pieces which yet remained to complete King Asoka's vow for the gift of a thousand

[1] According to Fâ-hien (chapter xxvii), this gift of the empire was recorded in an inscription on a stone pillar to the south of Pâṭaliputra. The site of the pillar has not been identified with certainty. The speech of Asoka in prose is as follows:—

'This earth, which ocean enwraps in a glorious garment of sapphire, this earth whereof the face is adorned with mines of diverse jewels, this earth, which supports all creatures and Mount Madara, I give to the Assembly.

'As the reward of this good deed I desire not to dwell in the palace of Indra, nor yet in that of Brahmâ, nor do I in any wise desire the felicity of kingship, which, quicker even than running water, passes away and is gone.

'The reward which I crave for the perfect faith whereby I make this gift is that self-control which the saints honour, and which is a good exempt from change.'

millions, were expended by the ministers in the redemption of the earth, and Sampadî was placed upon the vacant throne. He was succeeded by his son Vrihaspati, who was succeeded in order by Vrishasena, Pushyadharma, and Pushpamitra.

APPENDIX

By the kindness of Dr. Bloch and of Major Alcock, I. M. S., Superintendent of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, I am able to give the following list of casts of the Asoka inscriptions in the Indian Museum:—

I. The Fourteen Rock Edicts and Kalinga Edicts:—Girnâr, Dhauli, Jaugaḍa, Kâlsî, Shâhbâzgaṛhi, Manserâ (except the fourth portion, containing Edict XIII).

II. Minor Rock Edicts:—Sahasrâm and Siddâpura (except version No. III, from Jaṭinga-Râmeśvara).

III. Cave Inscriptions:—The three Barâbar Hill records of Asoka and the three Nâgârjuni Hill records of Dasaratha.

IV. The Tarâi Pillars:—Niglîva and Rummindeî (Paḍeriâ).

V. Pillar Edicts and Supplementary Pillar Edicts:—Allahabad (including the Queen's and Kauśâmbî Edicts), Lauṛiyâ-Ararâj, Lauṛiyâ-Nandangaṛh (Navandgaṛh).

The original Bhâbrâ Inscription is preserved in the rooms of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

Casts of some of the inscriptions also exist in the Provincial Museum, Lucknow.

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